Appendix B: Dating and Placement of Manuscripts Selected

1. Orosius

The Old English Orosius, also known as King Alfred’s Orosius, is commonly understood as a translation of Paulus Orosius’ Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII, composed in the 520s (Bately 1980a: lv). The fact that more than 250 medieval manuscripts survived until today underlines this book’s popularity at the time.

The Old English, or rather West Saxon version was believed to have been crafted by King Alfred himself, hence the name. Today, the king’s authorship is very much doubted. For a detailed account of possible authors consult e.g. Bately (1970).

Of the Old English version – we should hesitate to call it a translation for reasons given below – two manuscripts and a few fragments are extant: the Lauderdale or Tollemache Manuscript, British Library, Additional 47967, commonly called MS. L, and the Cotton Manuscript, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. i., referred to as MS. C in the literature. For this study, we use the former, older text, taken from the Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form (diPaolo Healy 2000). The fragments are too short to be of interest for the present purpose.

The single scribe of MS. L and the second scribe of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’s Parker manuscript are taken to be the same person (Bately 1980a: xxiii), which puts the text’s production in or shortly after Alfred’s lifetime (i.e. late ninth or early tenth century). In terms of language, “the Lauderdale MS. of the OE Orosius is one of the four manuscripts on which our idea of eWS [i.e. early West Saxon] is based, it is not surprising that its language is usually described as ‘typically eWS’” (Bately 1980a: xxxix).

The Cotton manuscript is somewhat younger, commonly categorised as late West Saxon and dated to the eleventh century (Bately 1980a: xlix). This version, too, has a connection to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, as the book not only contains the Cotton version of the OE Orosius but also the C or Abingdon II text of the Chronicle, described in Section 2.5 below).

The OE Orosius is certainly not a translation in the narrow sense, as Bately makes abundantly clear:

Although it is normally thought of as a translation, a more accurate description of Or[osius] would be paraphrase, a rendering of sense for sense not word for word by an author who [...] had no hesitation in making radical but unacknowledged alterations to his primary source, expanding freely but also cutting, rewriting some sections... (Bately 1980a: xciii)
Secondly, the Old English version is much shorter than the original: the latter features 236 chapters, the former merely 84, effecting it to be only about 20 per cent as long as Paulus Orosius’ text (cf. Bately 1980a: xcvi).

Thirdly and in spite of its relative brevity, the OE Orosius draws upon a wide variety of additional sources and relies on information Paulus Orosius could not possibly have had at his disposal, for instance “territorial divisions of Europe in the ninth century and the reports of [...] Ohthere and Wulfstan” (Bately 1980a: lx-lxi).

It is for these three reasons that we assess the risk of interference from Latin as negligible. On the other hand, the text is clearly non-fictional prose and as such ideal for our purposes and, as pointed out above, something like a gold standard for Old English. We hence use it as a yardstick against which we can measure the development of English gender. This study sampled the first 196 noun phrases and provides analysis and discussion thereof in Sections 6.1 and 7.1 respectively.

2. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

Its name or, more precisely, its number is very misleading since it suggests that the Chronicle is one monolithic work, impartially detailing the history of the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain and subsequent events in an unequivocal way. But quite the opposite is actually the case: although the Anglo Saxon Chronicle is likely to have come into existence as one ‘master document’ – as far as is known at the instigation of King Alfred in the late ninth century (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: cív) – it was in widespread circulation and was copied, altered, added to and used as a source by historians before the turn of the tenth century, in all likelihood only few years after its preliminary completion.2

This gave rise to an indefinite number of chronicles in Anglo-Saxon that in turn were copied, conflated, changed and/or continued all over England for the next two and a half centuries. Of these, seven versions and two fragments of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle survived, with one of the seven ‘full’ versions, MS. G, having almost entirely been lost to the flames in the Cotton library fire in 1731 (cf. section 2.3 below). These surviving seven manuscripts attracted scholarly interest as early as the sixteenth century; pioneers of Anglo-Saxon Chronicle studies were Laurence Nowell (1515-1571), John Joscelyn (1529-1603), who annotated MSS. A and D, and Abraham Wheloc (1593-1653). Modern, systematic analysis of the Chronicle began more than two hundred years later, bringing the insight that the Chronicle is in fact an array of texts: “Benjamin Thorpe’s

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1 The term ‘original’ should be understood in an abstract sense. We deem it very likely that none of the extant Latin manuscripts contains Paulus Orosius’ writing verbatim.

2 Whitelock et al. (1961: xxi) report that Asser, writing in 893, had used a Chronicle extending up to 887, possibly further.
synoptic six-text edition of 1861 was the first edition constructed to take account of the way in which the Chronicle comprises a set of works rather than a single one” (Irvine 2004: xvii).

Table B1 below provides an overview of the extant material, discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections. The one-page fragments H and I are too short and of too uncertain provenance to be of potential use for the present purpose and are only included here for completeness’ sake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sigil</th>
<th>By-name</th>
<th>Library and Manuscript</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The Parker Chronicle</td>
<td>Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The Abingdon Chronicle I</td>
<td>British Museum, Cotton MS. Tiberius A vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The Abingdon Chronicle II</td>
<td>British Museum, Cotton MS. Tiberius B i</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>The Worcester Chronicle</td>
<td>British Museum, Cotton MS. Tiberius B iv</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>The Laud / Peterborough Chronicle</td>
<td>Bodleian Library, MS. Laud 636</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The Bilingual Canterbury Epitome</td>
<td>British Museum, Cotton MS. Domitian A viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Cottonian Fragment</td>
<td>British Museum, Cotton MS. Otho B xi, 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Cottonian Fragment</td>
<td>British Museum, Cotton MS. Domitian A ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>An Easter Table Chronicle</td>
<td>British Museum, Cotton MS. Caligula A xv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B1: Overview of extant Chronicle manuscripts, including fragments

These surviving versions differ considerably in contents, age, provenance, and other factors: “[t]he Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is a term of deceptive simplicity applied by modern scholars to what is in fact a composite record of the utmost complexity.” (Dumville & Keynes 1986: vii).

The eloquence of Dumville & Keynes’ statement is only surpassed by its profound insight: this “utmost complexity” rendered the ensuing sections – originally envisioned as a brief review of previous research in the field of Chronicle studies – an extensive analysis of the manuscripts’ histories and relationships as well as often divergent scholars’ analyses and interpretations thereof. This fastidious scrutiny proved necessary in order to separate the evidence from conjecture and tradition, and then to assess diverging experts’ interpretations in the light of this evidence, so that we can arrive at a dating and placing of chronicle material that is both consistent with the oftentimes very slim and/or indirect evidence as well as plausible from a number of angles.

The Chronicle manuscripts’ dissimilar contents and character also demonstrate that a chronicle is not exactly a history; chronicles in general are not so much records of history rather than tools for it: their basic function was at first little more than to establish a chronology of pointers, the events themselves being remembered and possibly handed down orally, ‘in song and story’. Differently put, “in their laconic annals much was implied and little expressed” (Plummer 1899[1952]: xxi).
The layout of chronicles, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is no different in this respect, reflects this: typically, they are a list of year-numbers, prepared in advance, leaving a blank after each year, at first no more than one line. Into this blank whatever information pertaining to that year was entered, quite often considerably later when information was made available by travellers, or through the circulation of manuscripts. If no information considered noteworthy was available, the annal was simply left blank (cf. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxi).

Entries in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle typically begin with *Her* “here”, an adverb of place, not time (cf. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxii), which underlines the Chronicle’s original character being first and foremost an organising device and aide-mémoire rather than a repository of detailed information. This changed over time, however: long entries or even series of entries, committing to vellum more contents in addition to chronology, are interspersed with stretches of reticent one-liners. Later entries, such as the eleventh-century annals of MS. C (cf. section 2.5 below) or the twelfth-century annals of the Peterborough Continuations (cf. sections 2.7.3 and 2.7.4 below) begin with variations of “In this year” instead of *Her*, reflecting the gradual but non-monotonous transition from a mnemonic device to a historical record.

2.1. Historical and Linguistic Significance

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is, next to Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, the most important source for our understanding of Britain’s history from the withdrawal of the Romans around the turn of the fifth century up to the Norman Conquest. Besides its great historical value that derives from its contents, it is a highly interesting document for historical linguists: the surviving manuscripts capture English language over a span of two and a half centuries in a genre that remained comparably constant, even though conventions of manuscript production, letter forms and other aspects of scribal practice underwent a series of changes during this period.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was presumably begun under Alfred the Great, i.e. in late ninth-century Wessex, although its first annal refers to 60 BCE, making it obvious that it was not in fact begun before Angles and Saxons settled on the British Isles, let alone before the Common Era. The purpose of the Chronicle was, besides encouraging the use of the vernacular for scholarly and ecclesiastical purposes, to keep an ongoing record of the events that took place up to the reign of Alfred the Great as well as those that were still to come to pass.

Despite its insurmountable value as a historical source, the Chronicle manuscripts contain narrative as much as history, meaning different manuscripts report events in

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3 With the exception of the second continuation of the Peterborough Chronicle (cf. section 2.7.4 below).
different ways – in effect telling just one side of a story – or may even omit them altogether. Nonetheless, the Chronicle entries are good candidates for a linguistic study such as the present one, as they are longer texts of non-fictional prose and as such closer to spoken language than poetry or the highly formalised and/or planned language found for instance in laws, charters or in records of Christian rituals (cf. Section 4.1.2). Most importantly though, these texts contain many references to local events, and sometimes even offer opinions on those events, which is rare and useful evidence for dating and placing this material.

Another layer of complexity is added by the fact that “[n]one of these main chronicles or other components survives in its original form, so that each has to be reconstructed from the available witnesses and then judged on its own terms.” (Dumville & Keynes 1986: vii). Hence, it is often necessary to differentiate between a date and place of manuscript production, i.e. where and when the physical writing as it survives was fashioned by being copied, conflated or otherwise edited, and a time and place of text origin, i.e. when and where the passage in question was composed. Ascertaining the latter is obviously a much thornier issue than the former, given that evidence is scarce and indirect. Scholars chiefly rely on the contents of the manuscripts and textual relations between them, arriving at sometimes vastly dissimilar interpretations.

However, experts appear to agree regarding the broad brushstrokes of textual history and relations: all extant manuscripts resemble one another from the first entry (60 BCE, Roman invasion of Britain) up to annal 891/892.4 This stretch of annals is termed the Common Stock, and for good reason: the blank annals of the Common Stock, i.e. those consisting of an annal number only, are identical in all versions, as is the “positive historical content” of 102 Common Stock annals, while after that, “no annals are identical in all five versions [i.e. ABCDE]” (Cubbin 1996: xvii).

Some manuscripts, however, feature additional, northern material plaited into this Common Stock material, which is why they are referred to as the Northern Recension, represented by the extant MSS D, E and F. The extant Chronicle versions thus represent two distinct, albeit related strands of annals, on the one hand the southern manuscripts A, B and C, on the other those augmented with northern material, MSS D, E and F.

This is a rather fortunate state of affairs, because, provided we can track each manuscript’s history reasonably well, it enables us to compare developments of the gender system in manuscripts stemming from inside the Danelaw,5 an area with

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4 The dissimilar annal number is most likely due to a counting error that occurred in one copy of a non-extant ancestor, but not another copy.

5 The term Danelaw as used in this study refers to the area at some time under Viking rule, i.e. where ‘Danish law’ was in effect at one time, regardless whether it actually was under Viking rule at a
arguably more language contact to Old Norse due to Viking settlements, with those in
texts originating from the south of England, where there was little Viking settlement and
hence little OE-ON language contact (cf. Chapter 4).

From 892 onwards, the extant manuscripts diverge considerably, and textual
relationships become much more complicated and less well-evidenced. Sections 2.2-2.8
below discuss these insofar as they are relevant to this study. The oldest manuscript is
the Parker Chronicle, which was presumably begun in the lifetime of Alfred, i.e. before
900, while the youngest manuscript is the Peterborough Chronicle. The latter was
copied from a manuscript now lost, but which was also used in the construction of the F-
manuscript, called the Bilingual Canterbury Epitome (cf. Baker 2000).

2.2. MS. A, “Parker Chronicle” (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 173)

This version of the Chronicle is contained in the manuscript with the official designation
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 173 and is commonly referred to as MS. A in the
literature. It carries the by-name Parker Chronicle, because it used to be owned by
Matthew Parker (1504-1575), archbishop of Canterbury. This text of the Anglo-Saxon
Chronicle has received special attention as it is the oldest extant version of the Anglo-
Saxon Chronicle. However, even this oldest survivor of early English annalistic writing is
not the original, but a copy – or possibly a copy of a copy. Dumville & Keynes (1986: ix)
cautions that "even MS. A is by no means as close as we should like to the lost original in
textual authority or date".

On the one hand, a part of the A-text is a copy, copied directly or, more probably
through intermediate duplications from a lost original assumed to have been fashioned
under the supervision or at least by order of king Alfred the Great (reigned 871-899).
This copied segment comprises the annals titled 60 BC (Roman invasion of Britain) up to
and including 891 AD. The fact that this Common Stock occurs in very similar form in all
the manuscripts that survived in spite of their otherwise at times radically different
contents suggests one original template rather than several.

On the other hand, portions of this chronicle are originals, in the sense that they are
not contained in other surviving manuscripts nor were they demonstrably copied into

6 Although direct evidence is lacking that Alfred personally instigated the writing of the Anglo-Saxon
Chronicle, he is nonetheless the key figure in promoting the use of Old English for purposes of
education, history and also religious matters, in short, for scholarly writing (cf. Hunter Blair
1963[1965]: 12).

7 Plummer (1899[1952]) is an exception as he refers to the Parker Chronicle as Ā (read: A-prime) and
uses the designation A for the Chronicle version formerly included in Otho B. xi, which is commonly
referred to as MS. G. For the sake of clarity, this study refers to the Parker Chronicle as MS. A
throughout.
them. This added material is written in different hands, using different types of script and layout, so that on the basis of palaeographic, textual and historical evidence many of these additions can be dated and placed within some margin of error. They come in two forms: either scribes added entire annals reporting events that came to pass since the last entry, or they modified, extended or otherwise altered previous, older annals by writing in the margin, above the line or by – regrettably, from our perspective – erasing older script and writing over it. Such additions are termed interpolations (cf. section 2.2.3.1 below). Hence, the Parker Chronicle grew from the Common Stock (extending to annal 891) to the last vernacular entry (1070), and

it did so more by occasional bursts of activity than (as one might have imagined) by a steady year-by-year accumulation, and [...] the process often involved making alterations to the existing sequence of annals in order to bring the new material and the old into line with each other. (Dumville & Keynes 1986: ix)

After this last Old English entry, the language changes to Latin, relating ecclesiastical events from 1070 to 1093 and the chronicle becomes the Acta Lanfranci8 (cf. Plummer 1899[1952]: xcvi). The following sections scrutinise in how far different sections of the manuscript have been reliably assigned to places, times and scribes.

2.2.1. Scribes

The Parker manuscript features a number of hands, at times closely resembling one another, some displaying variation, “so that demarcation is sometimes very difficult indeed” (Bately 1986: xxi). This state of affairs is reflected in the divergent number of hands recognised by different scholars, ranging from fourteen (Plummer 1899[1952]: xxv-xxvi) down to five (Ker 1957: 58). We will not delve into the details of this palaeographic debate, but rather focus on what consensus can be derived from the relevant publications discussed below regarding the time and place in which the different sections of the chronicle were written.

In fact, for the present purpose it would be more desirable if a reliably dated and placed section were written by more rather than fewer scribes, as this would attenuate the potentially confounding influence of idiolect. In any case, the exact number of scribes is far less important for this study than dependable, if somewhat coarse-grained dating and localisation.

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8 Named after Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury from 1070 to 1089. Lanfranc was a trusted confidant of William the Bastard and acted as William’s vice-regent more than once. Lanfranc notably accelerated replacing Anglo-Saxons in high clerical offices by Normans as he considered the English an inferior race (cf. Encyclopaedia Britannica 1911).
In all brevity, scholars (Bately 1986; Dumville 1992; Ker 1957; Parkes 1976; Plummer 1899[1952]; Stenton 1925[1970]) agree that scribe 1 wrote all or nearly all the material up to and including annal 891. This excludes the interpolations inserted by later hands, which we gauge separately in section 2.2.3.1 below. The second segment stretches from annal 892 to 1001, though there is considerable dissension as to the precise number of contributing scribes. The final part of the A-text comprises the annals 1005 to 1070, again with said scholars being at variance concerning how many scribes exactly participated in the writing.

2.2.2. Placement

Parkes provides diverse palaeographical and historical evidence, which leads him to conclude that “the scriptorium [in which the A-text up to annal 1001 was produced] must be located at Winchester” (1976: 162), and that “[t]he last entries in the second booklet [containing the OE annals 925-1070 and the Latin entries 1070-1093] made in a hand of a Winchester type are those for 973 to 1001” (1976: 171). With this assessment he follows Plummer (1899[1952]: xcv-xcvi), who, through different considerations, came to the same conclusion considerably earlier.

Plummer (1899[1952]) and Parkes (1976) also agree that some time after annal 1001 had been written, the book was transferred to Canterbury, where it received the remaining ten vernacular annals 1005-1070. Again, the two scholars provide different, but converging evidence: Plummer (1899[1952]: xcvi-xcvii) notes that out of said ten entries six refer to Canterbury, while Parkes (1976: 171) points out that the scribe who wrote the Acta Lanfranci is the same that wrote the Bilingual Canterbury Epitome (British Museum, Cotton MS. Domitian A viii.), commonly referred to as MS. F (cf. section 2.8 below).

However, Plummer (1899[1952]: cxvii) surmises the date of transfer to be rather late in the century, referring to a dating of the first Canterbury hand to about 1075, whereas Parkes argues for an early transfer:

The Parker manuscript therefore left Winchester for Canterbury at about the time when Bishop Ælfheah was translated from Winchester to Canterbury in 1005, which suggests that Ælfheah took it with him. A York tradition informs us that Ælfheah took the head of Swithhun with him, so why not that other relic, the Parker manuscript? The most plausible explanation of its transfer is that, at that time, it was regarded as ‘the bishops’ [sic] copy’ (1976: 171).

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9  Bately (1986: xxiii) sees evidence for two more scribes having contributed one and two lines respectively.
Though conjecture, this notion is plausible as it can also explain the cessation of OE chronicling after annal 1070 and the manuscript’s continuation in Latin: the Norman-French Lanfranc, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1070, held the English – and certainly also their language – in contempt (cf. footnote 8). If the manuscript was indeed considered ‘the bishop’s copy’, the switch to Latin is hardly surprising. That the Latin continuation of the A-text ceases altogether a mere four years after Lanfranc’s death also ties in nicely with this interpretation.

In sum, Plummer (1899[1952]) and Parkes (1976) are only discordant regarding the transfer from Winchester to Canterbury occurred early or late in the eleventh century, but not that the Chronicle originated in Winchester.

By contrast, Stenton (1925[1970]) points out that the supposed Winchester origin of the Common Stock crucially rests upon the assumption that Winchester in fact was the West Saxon capital in Alfredian times. The grounds for this assumption he deems

to say the least, slender. Apart altogether from the extreme improbability that Wessex in the ninth century possessed anything that can be called a capital the importance of Winchester in this age may easily be exaggerated. (Stenton 1925[1970]: 107)

He provides textual evidence, to wit the contents of the ninth-century annals of the Common Stock, observing that “[t]his meagre record of events in the region around Winchester contrasts strongly with the abundant information which the Chronicle affords with reference to the country further west” (Stenton 1925[1970]: 108). He concludes that even though the Parker Manuscript is at least once removed from the non-extant original, it contains much which indicates an origin somewhere along the boundary of Somerset and Dorset, for example the circumstance that almost half of the Wessex localities mentioned in the annals 750 to 891 are found within a 35-mile (56 kilometre) radius around Somerton (cf. Stenton 1925[1970]: 113).
Figure B1: Map of England with places and areas associated with MS. A, including the approximate course of the Danelaw boundary for orientation.

Equally vocal in his rejection of the Winchester-origin hypothesis is Dumville (1992: 71): “I see no evidence for the composition of the Chronicle to *892 at Winchester.”

This stance he derives from the fact that the chronicle’s record of Winchester bishops is sketchy, but comparably comprehensive for those of the only other West Saxon diocese at that time, Sherborne (cf. Dumville 1992: 71-72). The ensuing annals 892-920 Dumville (1992: 69-70) hypothesises to have been written at court or at least by scribes with close ties to it (cf. section 2.2.3 below) and the absence of evidence for localisation of this material he motivates by the court having been itinerant. In light of this material relating detailed accounts of many military campaigns, chiefly against Viking invaders, his interpretation is at least plausible.

Bately (1986) is less certain about the Winchester origin theory, but tends to follow Plummer’s (1899[1952]) and Parkes’ (1976) opinion rather than Stenton’s (1925[1970]) and Dumville’s (1992), on the basis that some entries unique to A and its copy G (cf. section 2.3 below) relate to Winchester and that some hands in MS A are identical or similar to those in other manuscripts with “supposed Winchester connexions” (Bately 1986:xiii):

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10 The discrepancy found in the literature regarding the extent of the Common Stock in MS. A to annal 891 or 892 results from the fact that scribe 1 did write the annal number for 892, but not the entry itself. Some scholars refer to the last annal number (892), others to the last entry (891).

11 Sherborne is located near the north-eastern tip of the Dorset/Somerset border area (cf. Figure B1).
However, in the light of present knowledge I would suggest that what little evidence there is appears to support but not confirm the theory of a Winchester provenance for hands 1 and 2 (a-f) [i.e. the annals up to and including 924] (Bately 1986: xiv).

As much as the assessments of the studies discussed above differ in detail, we can derive a fairly reliable consensus regarding the placement of three annal sequences: first, the annals up to and including 891 form the Common Stock and hence have been copied – in Wessex most probably – from the original Chronicle or a copy thereof. Second, the annals 892-1001 were composed in Wessex; either at Winchester, somewhere in Dorset or Somerset, or ‘on the road’. Third, the remainder of the vernacular annals (1002-1070) originate in Canterbury, i.e. in Kent. Figure B2 below provides an overview.

![Figure B2](image)

The map above illustrates the likeliest placement of the three partitionings of the Parker Chronicle. Even though placement of the first two portions is somewhat vague (i.e. Winchester or elsewhere in Wessex), it readily becomes apparent that MS. A in its entirety originates from without the Danelaw.

2.2.3. Dating

Having established a reasonable chunking of the A-text according to the most likely places of production by carefully comparing and weighing previous analyses, we can now proceed to assign verisimilar timeframes for their composition, again by distilling a consensus from divergent expert’s views. The aim of this endeavour is not to pinpoint
the time of an annal’s writing down to the minute, but rather to work out the most likely
periods of production for sequences of annals in a resolution of half-centuries or, if
possible, decades.

Plummer (1899[1952]: xxvii) dates the copied Common Stock (annals titled 60BC-891 AD) to 900 at the earliest and to 930 at the latest. Bately is even more vague and
states only the obvious fact that “the final entry by this scribe [i.e. scribe 1] was made
not before 891” (1986 xxxiii). Dumville (1992: 83-87) discusses this hand in relation to
other manuscripts, rather implicitly giving a date of production between the 890s and
910s, 916 at the latest. Ker (1957: lx) somewhat enigmatically posits these annals to be
probably “nearly contemporary at their lower limit”, which we are presumably to
understand as some time between 890 and 900.

Parkes (cf. 1976: 153) is a bit more concrete, saying that these annals must have
been written in one fell swoop, shortly after 891 CE. He refers to the mentioning of
Alfred’s ‘hallowing’ in Rome in annal 853, which only makes sense with the benefit of
hindsight: in 853, Alfred was a weakly four-year-old and fourth in line to the throne, i.e.
then unlikely to ever become king or even survive. This reasoning, however, does not
rule out a later time of production. Pertaining to an upper limit for the text’s production,
Parkes (1976:153) judges the writing as “consistent with the end of the ninth century”,
the language as “appropriate to 891” and points to “what we know about the circulation
of other early copies”, as summarised by Whitelock et al. (1961: xxi).12

Thus, there is concurrence that the Common Stock was written after its last annal
891 and no later than 930, with most scholars placing the production of the Common
Stock in the last decade of the ninth century, while some do not rule out a production in
the first decade of the tenth. For our purposes it shall suffice to say that the Common
Stock of the Parker Chronicle is datable to a time between 890 and 910.

For the subsequent stretch of annals, 892-1001, a series of datings obtains from the
literature, requiring a further subdivision of the material: Bately dates the annals 892-
924 as from the 920s on the basis of being written in “[S]quare minuscule in the making”
(1986: xxxiii). Dumville (1992: 69-70) understands these entries as contemporary,
based on the amount of detail they contain regarding military campaigns, especially
responses to Scandinavian assaults, as well as information on the royal house and high
aristocrats. Plummer gives a slightly later date of circa 930 (1899[1952]: xxvii).

A number of scholars (e.g. Bately 1986: xxxii; Bately 1980a: xxiii-xxv; Parkes: 1976:
156-157, Ker 1957: 58, 165) agree that the hand(s) that wrote this stretch of annals
is/are identical with or at the very least from the same time and place as the one(s) that
copied the Lauderdale or Tollemache manuscript of the Old English Orosius. As this

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12 Whitelock et al. sum up what is known about the early (i.e. not long after 890) circulation of the
Chronicle as fairly widespread exchange of a number of different versions involving “a good deal of
collation of different texts and later alteration” (Whitelock et al. 1961: xxi).
study utilises a sample of the latter text as a benchmark for standard West Saxon against which the developments of gender assignment and exponence in later and more northerly texts compare, we can use this identity (or close association) of scribes to assess to what extent a copied, older text differs from a contemporary, original one produced by the same scribe (or at least by a contemporary at the same scriptorium).

The following annals up to 955 Bately (1986: xxxv) perceives as being written in “the Square minuscule typical of the 940s and 950s”, remarking that the evenness of the writing suggests an entry en bloc rather than in a piecemeal, year-by-year fashion, which results in a dating to the latter half of the 950s, concurring with Ker (1957:58). Dumville (1992:63) gives a date between 947 and 950 for this sequence; Plummer (1899[1952]: xxvii) dates them to about 960.

The remaining Wessex annals up to annal 1001 Ker (1957:59) dates to the latter half of the tenth century. Dumville (1992: 59-62) again ascribes these annals a contemporary production, while Bately (1986: xxxvii) characterises the writing of the annals 973-1001 as “an early eleventh century type of Insular minuscule”, but is otherwise silent on this matter; Plummer (1899[1952]: xxvii) dates the entries 969 to 1001 to circa 1000.

The Canterbury annals 1002-1070 date in Ker’s (1957:58-59) view to 1100-1125, an opinion that Dumville (1983: 41) and Bately (1986: xli) share, while Plummer (1899[1952]: xxvii) gives an earlier date of about 1075. Parkes (1976: 171), as quoted above in section 2.2.2 above, provides a plausible motivation for the conjecture that the manuscript moved to Canterbury early in the eleventh century. However, the chronicle’s supposed early arrival at Canterbury does not entail that it was continued there straight away. Even if we accept Parkes’ surmise, it is effortlessly conceivable that the manuscript had sat on a shelf unheeded for years or even decades before a scribe added to it.

As with the placement (cf. section 2.2.2 above), scholar’s views on the dating of the different parts of the chronicle differ in the details, but agree in the broad brushstrokes, which permits us to extract the following consensus: MS. A of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle divides into five parts. These five parts are summarised in Table B2 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Annals</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Stock</td>
<td>60 BCE - 891</td>
<td>890 - 910</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wessex Continuation I</td>
<td>892 - 924</td>
<td>900 - 930</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wessex Continuation II</td>
<td>925 - 955</td>
<td>950 - 970</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wessex Continuation III</td>
<td>958 - 1001</td>
<td>960 - 1010</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury Continuation</td>
<td>1005 - 1070</td>
<td>1075 - 1125</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Acta Lanfranci)</td>
<td>(1070 - 1093)</td>
<td>1100 - 1125</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B2: Partitioning of the Parker Chronicle (MS.A)
2.2.3.1. Interpolations

In order to make “the best use out of bad data” (Labov 1994: 11), we are well advised to maximise the eligible dateable and placeable material by scraping together all the material by a scribe whose writing has been credibly dated and placed. To this end, we turn to the interpolations of the chronicle manuscripts.

As the Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form (diPaolo Healy 2000), which the present analysis chiefly utilises, does not indicate which part of an annal is interpolated, we are reliant on other editions that do. For the Parker manuscript, the editions by Bately (1986) and Plummer (1892[1952]) are obvious candidates. Although these two scholars disagree regarding various palaeographic issues (cf. Sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2, and 2.2.3 above), their analyses are largely congruent when it comes to the interpolations. For maximum reliability, we only consider those interpolations which are identified, dated and placed alike by Plummer (1899[1952]: xxvi, xcvi-xcvii) and Bately (1986: xxxiv, xci-xcvi). These are summarised in Table B3 below.

2.2.3.2. Overview of Datings and Placements (MS. A)

From the preceding survey of palaeographic and historical treatises we can distil a consensus regarding a subdivision of the Parker Chronicle according the most likely places and times of composition, resulting in six distinct subsections. Table B3 below provides an overview. Please note that the time-spans given for the production of stretches of text are very round-about only and come with error bars attached. Overlapping periods are not meant to signify that two sections were worked on simultaneously, but rather illustrate the approximate nature of these estimates. In any event, the aim of this attempt at dating is to factor in time into the analysis as an ordinal variable, meaning in terms of earlier and later, without necessarily specifying by how much.

The final cohort of material featured in Table B3 consists largely of the Acta Lanfranci, written in Latin and hence of no use to us. But, the scribe of this material also contributed the bulk of vernacular interpolations and has been identified as the scribe who wrote the F-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the Bilingual Canterbury Epitome, discussed in section 2.8 (cf. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxvi; Ker 1957: 59; Baker 2000: lxxvi; but see also Bately 1986: xl for a different opinion).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Annals</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Associated interpolations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Stock</td>
<td>60 BCE-891</td>
<td>890-910</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wessex Continuation I</td>
<td>892-924</td>
<td>900-930</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wessex Continuation II</td>
<td>925-955</td>
<td>950-970</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wessex Continuation III</td>
<td>958-1001</td>
<td>960-1010</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury Continuation</td>
<td>1005-1070</td>
<td>1075-1125</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>870, 890, 923, 925, 942-3, 956, 959, 961, 993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>379, 381</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>409, 423, 430, 443, 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>508, 519, 530, 534, 547, 560,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>565, 538, 591-3, 595</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>603-4, 607, 616, 640</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>725, 748, 760, 768, 784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>925, 941</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B3: Partitioning of the Parker Chronicle according to times and dates of production, including interpolations. Interpolations in italics stem from the Northern Recension.

Hence, we can use Baker’s (2000: lxxvi-lxxxi) analyses of the F-text to arrive at a dating of the A-text interpolations in question: he cites Ker dating the F-text to “somewhere between the late 1080s and the early 1110s” (Baker 2000: lxxvi), which he modifies on the basis of textual evidence, notably the Investiture Controversy,13 arriving at “probable date of his text [i.e. the F-text] 1100 x 1107 - possibly later, but in any case not before 1100” (Baker 2000: lxxvi). This assessment allows us to place the production of the relevant interpolations somewhere in the first quarter of the twelfth century, i.e. between 1100 and 1125.

Another issue pertaining to the twelfth-century interpolations that needs addressing is the question whether their author was in fact a native speaker, given that the time of production is clearly post-conquest and the replacement of Englishmen by Normans in the higher clergy was well under way. It is hence possible that the scribe was in fact a Norman-French L2-learner of English. In this regard, Baker (2000: lxxix) offers reassurance: “His English is idiomatic and his vocabulary unmixed with French”.

However, what makes this material rather problematical is that it is taken from the Northern Recension (cf. Irvine 2004: xxxix): hence, on the assumption that this Northern Recension is northern not only in contents, but also in origin and thus linguistic features, we have a southern (i.e. Canterbury), twelfth-century scribe who inserts northern, rather older material into the manuscript, probably editing it in the process. Hence, it is

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13 The Investiture Controversy refers to a dispute about whether the clergy or the nobility has the right to appoint bishops and lower-ranking clerics (cf. Brooks 1984: 175-206).
going to be difficult to decide whether putative innovations in gender assignment and exponence are due to the material’s northern provenance or the scribe’s later date of activity. It cannot be reliably ascertained if and in how far the early 12th ct. Canterbury scribe adapted or altered the rather older, northern source text. It appears to be the weaker hypothesis that he significantly changed the entries he interpolated into MS. A, for “he was an enthusiastic reviser of manuscripts” (Baker 2000: xxx), evidenced by a number of manuscripts he edited. Consequently, even though the interpolations are dated and placed well enough, we shall desist from incorporating them into this study’s database.

The final point to consider here is whether the A-text’s Common Stock provides an expedient object of study: that the annals up to and including annal 891 are a copy is evident from the fact that virtually all the material stems from a single scribe. Since the template used in making this copy is not extant, it again remains imponderable whether, and if so, to what extent the copyist modernised or otherwise changed the language. On the other hand, it is rather well established that the commencement of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is linked to the reign of Alfred the Great (871-899) (cf. e.g. Hunter Blair 1963[1965]: 12), and that the Common Stock of the Parker Manuscript dates to 890-910 (cf. sections 2.1 and 2.2.3 above). Thus we have a theoretical maximum difference of 40 years between copy and original, while it is also easily possible that the two were produced contemporarily. If we understand the A-text Common Stock as an instance of Old English writing from the last third of the ninth century – give or take a decade – we arrive at an interpretation that sidesteps the issue raised above, but which is nonetheless congruent with the available evidence. Then again, the first Wessex Continuation is dated only marginally later, and as far as can be ascertained – is no copy, so that this seems to be a better choice.

2.3. MS. G (British Library MS. Cotton Otho B xi.)

This manuscript is taken out of order here, because it is, or rather was, a direct copy of the Parker manuscript, annals titled 60 BC – 1001 AD. It was copied before the A-text left for Canterbury, most probably some time between 1001 and 1013 (cf. Dumville 1992: 57). Consequently, the marks of successive production as well as intermittent and subsequent alterations so prominent in MS. A are absent from G. Moreover, most of this manuscript was lost to the flames in the Cotton library fire of 1731 (cf. Lutz 1981: xvi).

That we do have the text of this manuscript is due to the fact that it was copied by Laurence Nowell in 1562 and once again by Abraham Wheloc in 1643. Hence, this text is sometimes referred to as N or W next to G. In her doctoral dissertation on this version of the Chronicle, Lutz (1981) attests both copyists to have been aiming at a verbatim reproduction, apparently implying that neither Wheloc nor Nowell were entirely
successful in this endeavour, as she goes on to discuss deviations of these two copies in places where the original can still be deciphered (cf. Lutz 1981: xviii-xix). The surviving text, such as it is, is in principle of interest as it can illuminate which additions, alterations and interpolations occurred in Wessex (those will also occur in MS. G), and which ones took place later, i.e. in Canterbury (these then are found in MS. A, but not in G).

However, as all but one dateable and placeable interpolations found in A originate in Canterbury (the exception being the interpolation in 710, which both Plummer (1899[1952]: xxvi, xcvi-xcvii) and Bately (1986: xxxiv, xciii-xcvi) identified as belonging to the Wessex Continuation II), the G-text is unlikely to be very conducive to this study's aim. Moreover, G is a direct copy of A, so that an analysis of the latter is likely to mirror an analysis of the former without providing much additional insight. Finally, the scribal errors, idiosyncrasies and other changes introduced by Wheloc and Nowell (cf. Lutz 1981: lxxix – cxxxii) have the potential to obscure mediaeval developments in the language, for instance gender assignment and exponence. For these reasons, we will not utilise this text other than as a showcase for the cardinal role coincidence and luck play in the survival of historical documents.

2.4. MS. B, “Abingdon Chronicle I” (British Library Cotton MS. Tiberius A vi.).

This manuscript contains a version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle comprising the annals titled 60 BCE to 977 AD, written by a single scribe, whose hand is not known from any other extant manuscript or fragment (cf. Taylor 1983: xi, xxv).

The single hand clearly establishes that this version of the Chronicle is a copy rather than a 'living' chronicle such as the Continuations in A or E. Moreover, this manuscript is very closely related to another Chronicle document, the C-text, also called Abingdon Chronicle II, contained in British Library MS. Cotton Tiberius B.I (cf. Section 2.5 below). This relation, illustrated by Ker's (1957: 252) assessment that the two manuscripts run almost parallel for considerable stretches of annals (i.e. 491-652 and again from around 945-977), is closer than between any other two surviving manuscripts, which lead Ker (1957:252) to conclude that the scribe of C was copying these annals directly from B.

A word of caution regarding this analysis obtains from Taylor (1983: xxxvii), who notes that B and C share an average of 9 features per page against the other Chronicle versions in the annals up to 491, but only about five for the annals 491 to 652. However, Taylor (1983: xxxvii-l) then embarks on a detailed palaeographic analysis of the relevant material, the results of which he understands as indicative of “a particularly close connexion between B and C from 491 to 652” (Taylor 1983: xxxvii), concurring with Ker's (1957: 252) deduction. Taylor even goes a step further and asserts “that B and C,
taken together, form what is in effect a separate recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, extending to the mid-970s” (1983: xxxiv).

### 2.4.1. Placement

The B-text’s by-name *Abingdon I Chronicle* may not be fully justified. Of the modern scholars studying the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Plummer (1899[1952]: xxix, lxxxix) appears to be the first having attributed this document to have originated in Abingdon, a view that apparently remained rather unchallenged for more than half a century, until Whitelock et al. (1961: xii-xiv) take issue with it: they posit that the B-version exhibits no particular interest in Abingdon or its abbey before 971; neither the abbey’s destruction by the Vikings in Alfred’s reign finds reference in the text, nor its subsequent refounding. The manuscript is equally silent with regard to Æthelwold, first abbot of Abingdon, who became bishop of Winchester in 963.

Taylor (1983: ix) is similarly unconvinced by the Abingdon-origin theory as advocated by Plummer, particularly dissenting with Plummer’s “faith” in Thame’s close geographical proximity to Abingdon (less than 30 kilometres) as evidence for an Abingdon connection. The relevant annal 971 records the death of Oscytel, first bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames, later archbishop of York, to have transpired in Thame. According to Stenton (1943[1989]: 438), Thame belonged to the bishopric of Dorchester, which is even closer to Thame than Abingdon. Dumville & Keynes (1983: vii-viii) are also somewhat sceptical of Plummer's (1899[1952]: xxix, lxxxix) analysis, but do concur with its results based on indirect evidence derived from the C-text:

> It has never seemed entirely satisfactory to follow Plummer in attributing B to Abingdon purely from the reference to Thame (Oxfordshire) in annal 971 and the solitary notice of Abingdon at 977, for these are in principle susceptible of other interpretations. The case for Abingdon can however be strengthened by reference to the further notices of Abingdon in 981 C and 982 C, since C’s annals 978-82 are best taken as representing contemporary continuation of the *Chronicle-text* in B’s exemplar. If it can now be shown - and we think that Mr Taylor has provided the evidence - that the compiler of C had before him at Abingdon both B and B’s exemplar, then the only economical conclusion from this text-history and the Abingdon matter in 977 BC, 981 C and 982 C is that B was itself copied at Abingdon from an exemplar which also probably remained there. (Dumville & Keynes 1983: vii-viii)

A motivation as to why the B and C texts are so curiously silent regarding events around their supposed place of origin obtains from Conner (1996: xiv), who states that the kings Æthelstan (reigned 924-939) and Edmund I (reigned 939-946) both were benefactors to the Abingdon monastery, and that the monastery appears to have been deserted after...
the latter’s death. The texts themselves, though not directly recording that the monastery was abandoned, appear to support the notion indirectly as the annal 946 is followed directly by the one for 956, effecting a nine-year gap in the records.

In an attempt to reconcile Abingdon as the place of origin with the scarcity of material in the text referring to it, one might hence argue that the monks and clerics reopening the monastery had more pressing business for the next decade or so than continuing the chronicle, but this line of reasoning immediately raises the question why MSS B and C are also conspicuously terse in the annals covering the reigns of said kings: though these entries are exclusively about the two monarchs, all that is noted apart from their coronations and deaths is some of their activities in Northumbria and Scotland, totalling in merely 194 words for both. This seems a little ungrateful towards the regal patrons. In addition, the aforementioned stretch of annals is far from continuous: apart from the Mercian Register, which clearly is a separate document inserted into the Chronicle (see below), MSS B and C have no material at all for the period from 915 to 934, a gap of two years each occurs on either side of annal 937 (which contains the alliterative poem known as ‘the Battle of Brunanburh’ but no prose material), and two of one year each on either side of 942. Though plausible at first sight, a closer analysis reveals that ultimately, the rather cursory reference to the royal benefactors of Abingdon monastery in the first half of the tenth century contributes nothing to establish that the exemplar of B and C originated there beyond what is commonly known.

Taylor (1983: xi) subsumes the current standard of knowledge pertaining to the origin of B thus: “The book itself offers no hints as to its mediaeval provenance, much less to its origin.” He goes on to state that what little is known is derived from textual evidence and from comparisons with the C-text (see above and section 2.5 below).

It is interesting to note the authority Plummer still carries even almost a century after his death, especially in the light of the very slim positive evidence that supports his view for an Abingdon origin of B and C. In a similar vein, Plummer contemptuously regarded B as “a pale reflection of C” (Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxii, lxxvii) and consequently largely ignored it in his edition, resulting in “[h]is mistaken contempt seem[ing] to have ensured for B three-quarters of a century of scholarly neglect” (Taylor 1983: xviii).

In sum, then, the conventional wisdom that MS. B was copied at Abingdon, is based on indirect – and rather slim – evidence obtaining from a comparison with MS. C, sporadic mentioning of Abingdon and places in its vicinity in B’s and C’s mid- to late-tenth-century annals and, curiously, not least because of Plummer’s (1899[1952]: xxix,

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14 This figure obtains from counting the words of the C-text version included in the Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form (diPaolo Healy 2000).
lxxxix) assertions. Alternative placements suggested in the literature on MS. B are either conjecture or based on no more substantial evidence than the Abingdon interpretation. Moreover, the latter type point to places within roughly 30-kilometres around Abingdon (cf. above).

This, however, says nothing about the lost template, on which B and C depend. This template, as correspondences between B and C suggest, already contained the so-called 'Mercian Register', a series of annals from 902 to 924 relating Mercian events (cf. Taylor 1983: xxxv; Plummer 1899[1952]: cxvii), which invites to surmise a Mercian origin for these annals. The Mercian register in B and C is entered en bloc after the common-stock annal 915, before the Chronicle continues with an annal for 934, while in MS. D, the only other Chronicle text to feature these annals, they are plaited into the Chronicle material (see section 2.6.1 below).

Lacking positive evidence to the contrary, let us accept the Abingdon-origin theory for the time being, but modified to encompass the other suggested places for which there is at least some evidence. This leaves us with an approximate placement of B in or about 30 kilometres around Abingdon (cf. Figure B3 above), in other words in the border region between Wessex and English Mercia, in any case from some place outside the Danelaw area. On the basis of its contents, and lacking counter-indications so far, we understand the Mercian register as of Mercian origin.
2.4.2. Dating

As already mentioned in Section 2.4 above, the B-text’s final annal is for 977, which means that, since this Chronicle version is a copy start to finish and was written by a single scribe more probably continuously rather than in intervals, it cannot possibly have been copied before that date. Moreover, the regnal list following the Chronicle in the manuscript, which extends to Edward the Martyr (murdered 978) and breaks off in mid-sentence before recording the length of his reign has been “placed beyond doubt by the evidence of script, ruling, folio-size, and text” (Taylor 1983: xix) to belong to the MS. B originally. Hence, the writing of B is unlikely to have commenced before 977.

As for an upper limit of the manuscript’s production, Taylor (1983: xxiii) informs us that the letter-forms represent the “Anglo-Saxon Square minuscule characteristic of the second half of the tenth century. [...] And the abandonment of Square-minuscule forms at the turn of the century provides an approximate terminus ante quem.” The Square minuscule gave way to narrower Caroline letter forms typical for the eleventh century, and as B shows little sign of the latter, Taylor places the writing of B closer to 977 than to 1000, though he admits that “[i]n principle [...] MS. B may be up to about twenty years later than 977/8” (1983: xxiv).

All in all, the B-version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is hence quite well dated to the last quarter of the tenth century, but only roughly placeable to ‘presumably somewhere around Abingdon’, the Mercian register as ‘presumably from Mercia’. The Mercian register cannot have been included before 924, its last entry.

As B and C text have been shown to be very similar indeed – the C-version contains pretty much all that is in B while also containing additional material – analysing gender exponence and assignment in both texts is not likely to provide additional insight. This holds also for the Mercian Register, which Taylor (1983: xlvi) deems “to the closer to the original” in C than in B. We thus prefer C over B for analysis.

2.5. MS. C, “Abingdon Chronicle II”, (Cotton Tiberius B i.)

The manuscript containing this version of the Chronicle also contains the earlier of the two extant versions of the Old English Orosius, which also features in this study (see Section 2.4 above), followed by two poems serving as a kind of preface to the Chronicle, before the C-text itself begins.

The first annal in this Chronicle version is for 60BC, the last one for 1066, which breaks off halfway through the account of the Battle of Stamford Bridge only to be concluded in a different, later hand of twelfth-century appearance, writing on a separate sheet (cf. O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: xv, Plummer 1899[1952]: xxx). The close resemblance between this text and MS. B – as far as B’s endpoint in annal 977 – has been established.
in the previous section. To avoid redundancy, this section focuses on those aspects of MS. C that do not hold for MS. B as well.

To briefly recapitulate, both B and C are seen as linked to Abingdon, based on assuming a common ancestor as the two MSS. closely resemble one another, a single mention of Abingdon in annal 977 of both texts, some subsequent references to it in MS. C, and to a large extent on the assessments – conjectures or based on slim evidence – of previous scholars, notably Plummer, but also John Joscelyn in the sixteenth century and others (cf. O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: xv).

In addition to the annals shared with B, this Chronicle continues with some annals found in no other known Chronicle manuscript, while the ensuing annals’ reports of Æthelred dealing with the Danes (983-1016) feature in almost identical versions in the MSS D and E. The remainder of annals up to 1066 congruences in some parts with aforementioned Chronicle versions, but is independent in others (cf. Taylor 1983: xxxv).

2.5.1. Placement

As already mentioned in Section 2.4 above, the Chronicle MSS B and C are – traditionally, one might say – understood as of Abingdon origin, and some scholars advocate the Abingdon origin with rather more conviction and certainty than seems appropriate in light of meager and ambiguous evidence. In order to arrive at an informed judgement, it is hence necessary to review and weigh this evidence as well as the arguments relating to this evidence put forth by different scholars.

For instance, Plummer’s (1899[1952]: lxv) laconic statement “C [...] has always been recognised as an Abingdon Chronicle” is repeated several times in comparable wording throughout the monograph (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: lxxxix, xciii, cxviii) without the accompaniment of evidence any more conclusive or direct than that reported in Section 2.4 above. Conner (1996: lxxi) adopts a similar stance: “Ever since John Joscelyn described C as a Chronica Saxonica Abbindoniæ sometime before his death in 1603, we have found no unassailable arguments to attribute the manuscript elsewhere.” While this assessment is certainly correct – “unassailable arguments” are rare entities indeed – it does not entail or even imply that C (or B, for that matter) must therefore originate in Abingdon. Without belabouring the point, what we have here is an instance of the logical fallacy argumentum ad ignorantiam, lucidly explained by Bertrand Russell’s Celestial Teapot analogy:

If I were to suggest that between the Earth and Mars there is a china teapot revolving about the sun in an elliptical orbit, nobody would be able to disprove my assertion provided I were careful to add that the teapot is too small to be revealed even by our most powerful telescopes. But if I were to go on to say that, since my assertion cannot
be disproved, it is intolerable presumption on the part of human reason to doubt it, I should rightly be thought to be talking nonsense. (Russell 1952[1997])

To be fair, Plummer (1899[1952]) and Conner (1996) go beyond mere assertion in that they do provide some evidence in favour of Abingdon, scant though it is.\(^{15}\) Still, the point of contention remains that this, in and of itself, does not rule out the possibility that MSS B and C (and/or their common ancestor) originate elsewhere.

Conner presents additional arguments and evidence of varying persuasiveness, which in his view are “sufficient to prove the Abingdon origin of MS. C” (1996: lxxii, my emphasis). From fragments surviving in the two Abingdon Cartularies designated *Cotton Claudius C. ix* and *Cotton Claudius B.vi*, he postulates a hypothetical local Abingdon compilation, which he calls “house narrative” and which he supposes to have existed from ca 975 or even 956 (cf. Conner 1996. lxxii). Textual parallels pertaining to Abingdon between this hypothetical local compilation and the C text let him conclude that the supposed “house narrative” served as source material for both the B and C versions of the Chronicle as well as for the Cartularies mentioned above (cf. Conner 1996. xliv-xlvi). This line of argument is not particularly convincing, as it would require us to make the major additional assumption of a local, though non-extant, Abingdon compilation. If we choose to accept this premise for now, the evidence points to Abingdon as a possible origin, but it does neither conclusively single out Abingdon as the source, nor does it rule out other conceivable places. Hence it is probably best to either, if we were to subscribe to this premise, file it with the scarce and indirect evidence for Abingdon discussed above, or, if we are disinclined to assume a non-extant local Abingdon chronicle, to ignore it entirely.

Conner (1996 xxiii-xxx, xxxvii-lxviii, lxxii-lxxx) also provides a meticulous analysis of the C-text and its manuscript including many cross-references to other documents, from which he derives more evidence for an Abingdon origin. This evidence also varies in quality and persuasiveness.

Let us start with the least persuasive case. Conner (1996: lxxii-lxxiii) states for a number of annals that these are witnessed by B, i.e. occur there in identical or very similar fashion. While this is indisputable, his conclusion that, since B is an Abingdon document, this evidences C to be of Abingdon origin as well is unconvincing. As reported in section 2.4 above, MS. B’s association with Abingdon hinges substantially on its close relation with C, which in turn is taken as originating from Abingdon. This last detail is omitted in Conner (1996), so that the circular reasoning at this point is not apparent without consulting treatises on MS. B., such as Taylor (1983). In short, the close

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\(^{15}\) Plummer’s (1899[1952]) evidence is summarised in section 2.4 above, while additional evidence provided by Conner (1996) is discussed below.
correspondence between MSS. B and C invites the interpretation that both copyists reproduced their template fairly faithfully, implying rather than entailing the same placement for both versions, but this does not as such enlighten us regarding where this place is.

More compelling is the evidence Conner (1996: lxxii-lxxx) derives from sifting through C’s annals 956 - 1066 for those references to Abingdon that he understands important from an Abingdon perspective, but not so from a national or other local point of view. The reasoning is that there is little motivation to include this information unless the compilers perceived it as immediately relevant. As the information in question pertains to Abingdon, frequent inclusion of such information indicates an Abingdon provenance of MS. C (and thus also of MS. B). Events that fulfil said criteria are the deaths and successions of Abingdon abbots, the deposition of late archbishop’s and bishop’s corpses at Abingdon, and the report of Æthelwold’s death in 984, founder and abbot of Abingdon Abbey. These events are reported in annals 977, 981, 982, 984, 985, 990, 1016, 1044, 1047, 1048, and 1050 (cf. Conner 1996: lxii-lxxx), totalling in eleven entries spread over almost three quarters of a century, distinctly suggesting an Abingdon origin.

O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001) undertakes a similar analysis, differing from Conner’s (1996) in that she casts a wider net and searches not only for information that points to an Abingdon origin, but also for information that indicate the C-text having originated elsewhere. In effect, she, unlike Conner, counts the hits as well as the misses. Her verdict is that

“[t]he unique entries for 978-82 show a sustained interest in the southwest of England and in commemorating individuals connected to a nexus of houses associated with Æthelwold. [...] That continuation [978-982] had been produced by a coherent set of annotations whose common interests would suggest an origin elsewhere than Abingdon.” (O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: lxiii-lxiv).

Regarding the abbatial succession she notes that the reference to Æthelwold in annal 984 is modest in the C-text compared to the corresponding entries in MSS. A and D: the C-text refers to him by name alone, while A calls him *se welwillende bisceop*, “the benevolent bishop” and D *se halga bisceop*, “the holy bishop” (cf. O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: lxv) plus the appositive description *muneca fæder*, “father of monks” (cf. Cubbin 1996: xlii). C’s lack of praise for the founder and first abbot of Abingdon abbey does not sit well with its supposed Abingdon origin.

O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: lxv) also takes issue with Conner’s (1996: lxxii-lxxx) strongest piece of evidence, Abingdon’s abbatial succession as reported in C. Again, the difference in approach is that Conner counts the hits only while O’Brien O’Keeffe also
counts the misses. She notes the omission of two Abingdon abbots, to wit Osgar (963-984) and Æðelwine (1018-1030). The accession of a new abbot is arguably an event of some note for an abbey, and its omission casts legitimate doubt on the Abingdon origin of C so strongly advocated by Conner (1996).

Plummer surmises a Canterbury origin for the annals 983-1018, which are “practically identical” in MSS. C, D and E, based on “the lamentation over the ‘too speedy’ flight of the Kentish fyrd in 999, [...] the lamentation over the ruin of Canterbury, [...] and the minute narrative of Ælfheah’s martyrdom in 1012” (Plummer 1899[1952]: cxvi). This sounds fairly convincing, but the comparison of Conner’s (1996) and O’Brien O’Keeffe’s (2001) analyses above should have established that focusing a priori on the evidence supporting one’s favoured theory of origin while ignoring evidence that counts against it or supports a different origin is inferior compared to an analysis taking all kinds of evidence into account in order to derive a balanced judgement. And indeed, Dumville (1983: 27) as well as Keynes (1978) – reported by O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: lxvii-lxviii) – discount Plummer’s surmise in separate arguments, with Keynes (1978) propagating a London origin, while Dumville (1983: 27) dismisses Abingdon as potential place of origin and seems to favour Ramsey and London, though implicitly and without providing evidence or arguments for either place.

For an interim summary, then, the annals 978-1023 may originate in Abingdon, which is what Conner (1996: xxiii-xxxi, xxxvii-lxviii, lxxii-lxxx) and Plummer (1899[1952]; lxv, lxxxix, xciii, cxviii) believe – though Plummer (1899[1952]: cxvi) sees some likelihood for annals 983-1018 to stem from Canterbury. O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: lxiii-lxv), on the basis of a more impartial analysis, discounts Plummer’s and especially Conner’s case for an Abingdon origin, but does note this Chronicle’s preoccupation with events in England’s southwest in the annals 978-982. As a consequence, she advocates a placement of C somewhere in the southwest, but probably not Abingdon (O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: lxiii). In this she assumes a similar stance as Stenton (1943[1989]: 438), Whitelock et al. (1961: xii-xiv), Dumville & Keynes (1983: vii-viii), and Taylor (1983: ix) do regarding the placement of MS.B. (see section 2.4.1 above).

Concerning the remainder of the C-text, Conner (1996: lvii-lxix) and O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: lxvii-lxxiv) argue for, respectively against an Abingdon origin as they did for the previous sequences of annals. We will not retrace each and every argument they bring forth in detail, but rather focus on some of the more noteworthy ones. It is quite interesting how the two scholars at times derive diametrically opposite conclusions from exactly the same textual evidence.

For instance this part of the C-text, as the one discussed above, mentions some of the Abingdon abbots from 1030 to 1066, but omits others. O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: lxii-lxii)
understands the omission of Ordric and Ealdred (also called Brihtwine) as speaking against an Abingdon origin. To put this into perspective, let us consider the periods for which they held the abbacy, taken from a list of Abingdon abbots featured in Kelly (2000: ccxi-ccxviii): Ordric was abbot of Abingdon from 1052 to 1066, and Ealdred succeeded him in 1066 and held the abbacy until 1071. The omission of the former certainly does not help the Abingdon-origin theory at all, but the latter’s omission has comparably little bearing on the issue at hand: the C-Chronicle breaks off in mid-sentence relating the Battle of Stamford bridge, and annal 1066 is only continued in a much later hand, after which it was discontinued for good (see above). Moreover, “the script [in the annals 1065-1066] appears hurried, ignores the right margin on the verso, and contains careless errors” (O’Brien O’Keeffe: lxxii). Given this clear indication of hasty composition, the omission of the two abbots may well have been an honest mistake or oversight and hence is not necessarily evidence against Abingdon.

Conner (1996: lix-lxix), conversely, interprets the mentioning of four out of six abbots as indicative of an Abingdon origin. Going by sheer numbers, then, this time Conner appears to have the weightier argument.

However, O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001 lxx-lxxi) points out that the way and the circumstances in which the text refers to the individuals concerned suggests a national perspective rather than a local one: Siward, abbot of Abingdon from 1030 to 1044, was promoted to the archbishop of Canterbury’s assistant, and the C-Chronicle mentions his promotion (1044) and his death (1048), but not his accession to abbot (1030). Similarly Sperhafoc, abbot of Abingdon from 1047/48 to 1051, is only mentioned in the report of Edward’s council in London in 1050, where Sperhafoc was promoted to bishop of London 17. This observation clearly counts against an Abingdon origin, especially if we were to follow Conner (1996: lxxii, cf. above) in assuming the existence of a “house narrative” serving as a direct template for the composition of this part of the C-text: it is hard to fathom why a document, whose first and foremost purpose it supposedly was to record the events in and around Abingdon abbey, should be sketchy regarding such pertinent information as the successions of the head clergyman. Simply put, the C-text (and up to 977, also the B-text) is curiously disinterested in or even ignorant of the goings-on in its supposed place of origin compared to, for instance, the amount and detail of local matters in the Continuations of the E-version of the Chronicle (cf. Sections 2.7.3 and 2.7.4 below), which is quite beyond doubt a Peterborough product (cf. O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: lxxvii).

A thorough and critical history of the attribution of MS. C. to Abingdon obtains from O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: lxxiv-lxxxix), in which she also tries and tests every argument

17 He was never consecrated though, because he absconded with large amounts of treasure shortly afterwards (cf. Blair 2004).
Conner (1996) advances in favour of an Abingdon origin, finding all of them wanting. We shall not review her detailed criticism here; the surmise that Conner’s (1996) arguments at times do warrant some extra scrutiny should have transpired from the preceding paragraphs. At any rate, it is interesting to note how much more careful the former scholar is in her rejection than the latter is in his affirmation: compare “[t]he house-narrative is [...] sufficient to prove the Abingdon origin of MS. C.” (Conner 1996: lxxii) with “We must consider the case for an Abingdon origin for the C-text unproved.” (O’Brien O’Keeffe: 2001 lxxxix).

So, O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001) does not in fact rule out the possibility of an Abingdon origin of C. In terms of alternative places of origin, she refers to evidence that appears to favour Canterbury: in the relevant stretch of annals Seebold (1992: 434) has identified four words apparently of “Jutish”, i.e. Kentish origin, in addition O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: ci-cii) identifies a number of Kentish phonological features reverse-engineered from spelling. As this is far from conclusive – O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: xc) says so herself – she provides additional evidence of an interesting kind: of all the extant Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, only MS. C takes a decidedly anti-Godwineist stance. For example, it is C alone which names Godwine as the perpetrator of the seizure and subsequent fatal blinding of Ælfred Ætheling in 1036 (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 421), while D relates the event, but does not incriminate Godwine, and E omits the entire affair (cf. O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: lxix).

To infer a probable place of origin of these annals, O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: xci) looks for places – that is abbeys, monasteries and diocesan towns – which suffered from Godwine’s aggrandisement and hence had good reason for a hostile attitude towards him. Here, Abingdon is no contender: Godwine is known as a benefactor of the abbey (cf. Williams 2004a), consequently it would make no sense to incriminate a patron of the house. The same holds for the Old Minster at Winchester and St Augustine at Canterbury (cf. Williams 2004a). Christ Church, the second great Canterbury house, however, had ample reason to resent the avaricious Godwine family: Eadmer, (ca 1060 – ca 1126) a historian and monk of Christ Church (cf. Rubenstein 2004) pictures Godwine as a hostile adversary, because he acquired some of Christ Church’s real estate by means of trickery and guile. The house’s head at the time, archbishop Eadsige, was apparently too unwell to effectively counter Godwine’s actions (cf. O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: xci). Eadsige, because of his poor health, was the one who called Siward from Abingdon to Canterbury to function as his assistant (cf. Hunt & Smith 2004b), so that the reference to Siward in MS. C is equally indicative of Canterbury as it is of Abingdon in terms of origin (cf.

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18 The four “Jutish” words are gearcian (995), elcian (999), winterlæcan (1006), and bepæcan (1015).
19 Godwine (d. 1053) became earl of Wessex under King Cnut and amassed considerable riches and power. He continued to be an important political figure under Harold Harefoot and Edward the Confessor after Cnut’s death in 1035 (cf. Williams 2004a).
More importantly, though, is that Christ Church had not only a motive to resent the powerful earl Godwine, but also, being the archbishop’s see, enough power and authority itself to be able to attack him (and, by extension, his family) quite openly without having to fear retribution.

O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: xc) notes that the production of MS. C coincides with Siward’s advancement to Eadsige’s assistant at Canterbury in 1042, and she speculates that Siward might have used his new influence to have a copy (i.e. our extant C) made with Abingdon annotations. Siward came from Abingdon and was very fond of that monastery: he is known as “a munificent benefactor to the monastery, to which he gave Wittenham, near Wallingford, and all the furniture of his chapel” (Hunt & Costambeys 2004) and when he retired from Canterbury in 1048, he returned to Abingdon to die there later that year.

To sum up, evidence supporting an Abingdon origin is almost exclusively compatible with other potential places of composition/copying as well, most notably Christ Church in Canterbury. On the other hand, some evidence speaks against Abingdon, such as the sketchy record of abbatial succession throughout the tenth- and eleventh-century annals. The hostile attitude towards Godwine favours Canterbury as strongly as it disfavours Abingdon and other places, because Christ Church had both the motive and the power to openly incriminate a mighty earl, while other places had neither reason to inculpate their benefactor nor, presumably, enough power and authority themselves to withstand a likely reprisal. This evidence is most compelling since it dovetails with other circumstances suggestive of Kentish origin, such as “Jutish” words (cf. Seebold 1992: 434) and Kentish phonology (cf. O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: ci-cii) and the distinctly Kentish focus in terms of contents in the annals 983-1018 as noted by Plummer (1899[1952]: cxvi; cf. above). Abingdon is indeed mentioned frequently, yet in every instance this mentioning occurs in matters of national or Canterbury interest, so that Abingdon is at best one amidst a few conceivable homes of MS.C., while there appears to be no piece of evidence that points to Abingdon and at the same time away from other places, first and foremost Christ Church. Figure B4 below provides an overview:
All in all, strictly speaking, the evidence available and the arguments put forth can neither confirm nor rule out with finality any of the places discussed here as origin of C. Its contents display a south-eastern focus in some sections, and a south-western one in others, suggesting several sources. The manuscript itself appears more likely to have been written at Christ Church, Canterbury, rather than any other place, including Abingdon. Thus, for the time being, we file this document under 'of probably Canterbury origin, pending further evidence'. The Mercian register, inserted en bloc after annal 915, we put down as of Mercian origin, since it relates Mercian affairs and we have no indication that it originated elsewhere (see Section 2.4 above). In any case, the discussion above shows that MS. C originates in all its sections – except the Mercian Register – from southern England, i.e. outside the Danelaw area.

2.5.2. Dating

As Section 2.4.2 above pointed out for MS. B, MS. C is likewise a copy up to 977. Unlike B, C features about six to eight hands, the exact number of which depends on which scholar we consult (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxx; Rositzke 1940: 1; Ker 1957:253; Taylor 1983: xxxvii-xxxviii; Conner 1996: xxi-xxii; O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: xxvi).

Fortunately, the same scholars are in widespread agreement about the copied part of the manuscript having been written in the mid-eleventh century (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxi; Rositzke 1940: 1; Ker 1957:253; Taylor 1983: xxxvii; Conner 1996: lxxi; O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: xxvii) and only disagree with respect to the time of composition of the annals 978-1066. Therefore, we need not dwell on how many scribes
exactly are involved, but rather aim at deriving a consensus from the similar, though not identical groupings and datings of annals proposed previously.

This manuscript continues from the copied material shared with MS. B with a section of annals peculiar to C, relating “scrappy but geographically coherent” (O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: xliv) material focussing on the south-west, covering 978-982. As this material is not witnessed elsewhere, and the contents does neither hint at contemporary or later composition, these annals are difficult, if not impossible to date more accurately than having been copied into MS. C in mid-eleventh century, thus having been composed some time between the years they refer to and the dating of the writing in the manuscript (i.e. around 1040), resulting in a 60-year time-span.

Annals 983-1022 occur almost entirely identically in MSS C, D and E: the C-text contains just over 6000 words, E is only about 200 words (three percent) longer, and D contains a mere 30 words (half a percent) more than C.\(^{20}\) The non-extant source of this text is referred to as the “Chronicle of Æthelred & Cnut” (cf. e.g. Irvine 2004: lxv). The fact that this section survives in virtually identical form in three manuscripts with rather dissimilar histories allows the conclusion that these annals essentially still are as they were composed, although they have been copied in the meantime. Hence, we are in the rare and fortunate situation to be able to date a source rather than a copy. As the original is not extant, however, we are confined to textual evidence.

Whitelock (1979: 245) as well as Cubbin (1996: xlvi) point to annal 1012, which relates in detail the violent death of archbishop Ælfheah at the hands of a drunken Danish force and his subsequent burial as a martyr in London’s St Paul’s minster, ending with the words “And God now reveals there the powers of the holy martyr” (Whitelock’s [1979: 245] translation, emphasis added). But the corpse was transferred to Canterbury in 1023, as the Chronicle itself reports. Whitelock (1979: 245) and Cubbin (1996: xlvi) understand this as demonstrating that the section of annals was written before 1023.

This interpretation clearly fits the facts, but does not entirely rule out a later time of production: the author(s) responsible for this section may have known about this transfer of relics in 1023 but constructed the 1012 entry historically accurately or may simply have been ignorant of Ælfheah’s corpse’s transfer to Canterbury a decade later. But then, signs of retrospect, such as inclusion of information which would only become available considerably later, are absent from this stretch of annals, so that we might as well accept the proposal of the two aforementioned scholars as the weaker hypothesis.

More evidence for fairly contemporary production of these annals obtains from annal 988, which was quite certainly not written before 990, but very probably not much later either: it reports archbishop Dunstan’s death and Æthelgar succeeding him.

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\(^{20}\) This calculation obviously excludes E’s long annal for 963, which is a Peterborough interpolation (cf. Section 2.7.2 below).
noting that the latter was only to live a short while afterwards and precisely quantifies this period as one year and three months. And indeed, Æthelgar died on 13 February 990 (cf. Hunt & Smith 2004a).

This gives us then a fairly precise dating for a section of MS. C’s copied part: annals 983-1022 are near-contemporary in their composition, i.e. some time between the years they record and 1023 at the latest, but were not entered into MS. C before the 1040s (cf. below).

The next section of annals, 1023-1034 contains very little material, which, for the most part, is unique to C (cf. Conner 1996: xxi, xxv-xxvi). Its meagre contents is very general, warranting no speculation regarding its provenance and is not suggestive of contemporary production.

The last group of copied annals covers the period from 1035 and extends to the mid-to-late 1040s. Scholars have diverging opinions about where exactly the copied part of C ends and the roughly contemporary continuation begins. For the moment, we follow O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001: lxviii-lxix) in terminating this section with annal 1044. This decision is not fully arbitrary: in contrast to the previous group of annals, this one features more and more detailed contents, such as Alfred Ætheling’s blinding in 1036, marked by extensive parallels with MS. D (cf. Conner 1996: xxvi; O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001:lxix). Conner (1996: xxvi) surmises contemporary entry into proto-C, due to the “variety of notices contained in this segment and lack of foreshadowing”, but any physical evidence was lost in the copying process. In any case, this section’s earliest entry is at most 15 years removed from the production of MS.C, while those relating events of the 1040s are virtually contemporary given that MS.C was not begun much later than in the mid-1040s.

Plummer (1899[1952]: xxxi) judges the annals from 1049 onwards as contemporary with the events they describe; Conner (1996: xxvi) ascertains the stretch of contemporaneous annals to begin somewhat earlier with annal 1044 but to extend only to annal 1048. Rather unsurprisingly, O’Brien O’Keeffe (2001:xxviii) disagrees and finds that “[i]t would appear that the annal for 1045 was written at a different time from what preceded. The annals for 1046 and 1047 appear to have been written at a single go, and that for 1048 written separately”. Taylor (1983) concurs, citing Ker (1957: 253) in dating the chronicle to about 1045 after which it “has been thought to have been sporadically kept up to date there until 1066” (Taylor 1983: xxxiv). Dumville (1983: 25) sees annal 1045 as the point from which onward the text is being “kept up on a more or less year-by-year basis” but annals 1035-1044 as being written after Harthacnut’s death in 1042.

Conner (1996) gives the most precise dating for the remainder of the Chronicle: annals 1049 - 1056 he assesses to have probably been added “between 1057 and 1065”
(Conner 1996: lxxix), while the last two annals, 1065 and 1066 – except the completion of 1066, which is in a twelfth-century hand – “were added no later than 1080, since they were copied by the compiler of D, who must have worked shortly after 1080” (Conner 1996: lxxix).

The last eight lines in annal 1066, dated to the twelfth (cf. Ker 1957: 253) or even late twelfth century (cf. Conner 1996: xxix) are peculiar to C. They conclude the report of the battle at Stamford Bridge and may either be a later, moderately modernised replacement of damaged original material, as Conner (1996: xxix-xxxi) argues, or “an imaginative conclusion to the Battle of Stamford Bridge” (O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: lxxiii), implying a twelfth-century date of composition. It appears impossible to decide with finality between the two on the basis of so little material, but noticeable differences in spelling and style in this conclusion of annal 1066 compared to that of preceding entries lends more weight to O’Brien O’Keeffe’s (2001: lxxiii) surmise.

In sum, then, none of the scholars consulted dates the production of this manuscript to before 1045 or after 1080 – again excepting the twelfth-century completion of annal 1066. The section shared with MSS D and E, annals 983-1016, was in all likelihood composed only a few years after the events described came to pass, with annal 1012 almost certainly before the year 1023. This leaves us with two sections eligible for analysis from this Chronicle: the annals mirrored by MS. D and E, composed roughly contemporarily in the last decade of the tenth and first two of the eleventh century, and the subsequent material, added to the manuscript, though not necessarily composed, no earlier than 1045 and no later than 1080. However, as the former dataset occurs in virtually identical form also in the northern E-text (cf. section 2.7 below) as well as the highly composite MS. D (cf. section 2.6 below), the origin of the source text is uncertain, as well as is the extent of editing that precipitated during the unknown number of intermittent copies. Hence, the most auspicious course of action is to file C’s annals from 1045 till 1066 under contemporary production at Canterbury, and to desist from including the preceding annals, whose origin is uncertain.

There are only minor disagreements as to which (stretches of) mid-to-late eleventh-century annals were written contemporarily and which ones a couple of years later than the events reported. In any case, a period of about 35 years (ca 1045-1080 CE) for the annals 1045-1066 to have been written into MS. C should be precise enough a dating for the present purpose.

2.5.3. Summary for MS. C

In the preceding two sections we subdivided this text with respect to the dates and places these subdivisions were presumably composed and when and where they found entry into the manuscript. Table B4 below gives an overview.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Annals</th>
<th>Dating (MS.)</th>
<th>Placement (MS.)</th>
<th>Dating (source)</th>
<th>Placement (source)</th>
</tr>
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<td>60 B.C. – 891</td>
<td>1040s</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>890 - 920</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation shared with B</td>
<td>892 - 977</td>
<td>1040s</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>before 1000 (cf. B)</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercian Register</td>
<td>902 - 924</td>
<td>1040s</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>tenth c. (cf. B)</td>
<td>Mercia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation peculiar to C</td>
<td>978 - 982</td>
<td>1040s</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>980 - 1040</td>
<td>Wessex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Chronicle of Æthelred &amp; Cnut”, shared with D &amp; E</td>
<td>983 - 1022</td>
<td>1040s</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>980 - 1023</td>
<td>Kent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sketchy annals peculiar to C</td>
<td>1023 - 1034</td>
<td>1040s</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1035 - 1044</td>
<td>1040s</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>1035/1042 - 1044</td>
<td>Kent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final annals partly shared with D</td>
<td>1045 - 1066</td>
<td>1045 - 1080</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>approximately contemporary</td>
<td>Kent/ Wessex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last eight lines of 1066, peculiar to C</td>
<td>1066</td>
<td>12th c.</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>contemporary or 12th c.</td>
<td>presumably Canterbury</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B4: Components of MS. C according to their likely places and times of composition, respectively

2.6. MS. D “Worcester Chronicle”, (British Library Cotton Tiberius B iv.)

The attribution of MS. D to Worcester seems to rest on feet of clay, very much like the Abingdon origin of B and C or the Winchester origin of A (cf. Sections 2.2, 2.4, and 2.5 above). Parallel to other Chronicle manuscripts discussed so far, D’s attributed origin goes back to John Joscelyn, who laid hands on it in Worcester Cathedral in 1565/66 and hence referred to it as “Chronica Saxonica Wigornie(nsi)s ecclesiae ab anno domini primo ad annum domini 1080” (cf. Cubbin 1996: ix). We thus only know that, from the perspective of modern Chronicle studies, the D-version was discovered in Worcester, but have no direct evidence how or when it got there. At face value, it might have been composed there, or it might have been brought there after it was discontinued, for instance “after one of the various fires, such as that of 1113 or 1189, or indeed at other unspecified times not suggested by circumstantial evidence” (Cubbin 1996: ix).

As cited above, Joscelyn noted this Chronicle text to extend from the beginning of the Common Era to 1080, but Plummer (1899[1952]: xxxii) and Cubbin (1996: xi) deem it likely that this last annal number (i.e. MLXXX) is a scribal error and is supposed to mean 1130 (i.e. MCXXX). The very final entry relates the rebellion of Angus of Moray, who died in battle in 1130, so that the suggestion of a numbering error is persuasive. Regarding the final two entries 1079 and 1130 (mislabelled 1080), it is interesting to note that half of the last manuscript page is missing, truncating the second-to-last entry in mid-word,
and the final, mislabelled annal is entered on the verso of that mutilated page in a
different, obviously later hand. This leads Plummer (1899[1952]: xxxii) as well as
Cubbin (1996: xi) to conclude that the amount of material lost due to this mutilation
cannot have been very great, maybe just one word to complete the sentence, at most
material filling no more than half a page, otherwise the verso would probably have been
occupied by other eleventh-century material rather than the late addition of a mid-
twelfth-century event. Also, Plummer (1899[1952]: xxxiii) notes that acquisition of
blank vellum was a frequent motive for manuscript mutilation.

Another gap in the material is effected by annals 262 to mid-693 being in lacuna,
probably due to the manuscript having lost about eight leaves, whose contents Joscelyn
tried to extrapolate from MSS. A, B, C, and E and subsequently inserted the
reconstructed material into the mediaeval manuscript on separate leaves of paper (cf.
Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxiii; Cubbin 1996: x). Needless to say, these sixteenth-century
reconstructions are unfit for analysis in the present study.

As most extant Chronicle versions, D is a copy, at least for the most part (cf.
Section 2.6.2.1 below) rather than a ‘living’ chronicle such as MS E from 1121 onwards
(cf. Section 2.7.3 below). Hence, it may prove illuminating to ask not only where and
when the manuscript as it survives was fashioned, but also, if possible, scrutinise where
and when its component parts were most probably authored.

Obviously, the latter question is an even thornier issue than the former, given that
we normally have little means to ascertain to what extent the copyists altered their
template. Nevertheless, should an older or more southerly component handle gender
assignment and exponence differently, i.e. more traditionally than a younger and/or
more northerly component, then this is immediately pertinent to the research this study
aims at contributing to. If such differences can be observed in material written in the
same hand, then this also attenuates a possible, confounding influence of idiolect.

Most of D is judged as conservative, especially those parts contributed by the first
two scribes (cf. Cubbin 1996: xvii-liii), meaning that there is no evidence that the scribes
altered the material they extracted from their templates noticeably, so that chances are
quite good that the peculiarities of these templates are preserved. Another indicator for
this is that D appears to be cobbled together in a quick-and-dirty way: Plummer
(1899[1952]: lxxxi) for instance stigmatises this Chronicle as “unskilfully compiled, and
carelessly written”. The analysis below should establish that Plummer’s assessment is
correct, acerbic though it is. This is a happy circumstance in the light of this study’s aim,
as duplications, breaks in the narrative, etc., which result from this ‘unskilful
compilation’, arguably facilitate dissecting the D-text into its component parts. These
components we can then endeavour to date and place as accurately as we may, in
addition to dating and placing the compilation itself.
2.6.1. Dating and Placing the Compilation

There is widespread agreement that the Chronicle version at hand came into being in the mid-eleventh century and was then updated, supplemented and continued every once in a while (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxiv, lxxxi; Keller 1900: 52; Ker 1957: 253-254; Cubbin 1996: lii-liv). As most annals' contents occurs in similar form in other Chronicle manuscripts and/or other documents (cf. section 2.6.2 below), D continues to be a compilation of chronicles rather than a chronicle in its own right for the remainder of the time it covers.

As to when these subsequent entries were made, a number of aspects suggest that at least a few years passed between the events reported and the inclusion in this Chronicle: for instance, Plummer (1899[1952]: lxxxviii) notes a retrospective tone in annal 1065 reporting “the shires ravaged by the insurgents were ‘many winters the worse'” (Plummer's emphasis) and “late words” such as prisun (1066) and corona (1076) where parallel entries in E have native words.\footnote{Prisun is clearly Norman French, but corona is Latin, thus in itself no evidence for a post-Conquest dating of this entry. Also, E does feature corona in its copied material, once in annal 1085 and once again in annal 1111.} Another peculiarity in D’s later annals is the profound interest in Margaret of Scotland (c. 1045-1093): annal 1057 imparts information on her father, annals 1067 and 1075 on herself. Plummer (1899[1952]: lxxxviii) interprets “the evident anxiety of the compiler in 1067 to trace Margaret’s descent from the royal house of Wessex” as indicating that this entry could not have been made before 1100, when her daughter married Henry I.\footnote{Margaret was canonised as a saint in 1250. A life of her in the sense of a hagiography should not have existed before her sanctification. However, her former chaplain wrote a life of her early in the twelfth century (cf. Barrow 2004).}

Whitelock et al. (1961: xvi) and Whitelock (1979: 115) both cite Frank Stenton as having “suggested that ‘D’ was destined for a Scottish court”, but provide no reference. If so, Whitelock et al. (1961: xvi) argue a scribe would not have had access to “a Life of her before her death in 1093”. Anyhow, this would explain an interest in Margaret before the turn of the century. Both suggestions are somewhat plausible but lack evidence.\footnote{More plausible and better evidenced is Cubbin’s (1996: lxxiv) explanation, which draws attention to Margaret having been a “personal acquaintance of the circle of bishop Wulfstan”. Wulfstan was bishop of Worcester from 1062 until he died in 1095. This strongly suggests a Worcester origin of the compilation.}

Lacking positive evidence for a later entry of D’s final annals (again exempting the later addition on Angus of Moray for 1130 mislabelled as 1080) there is no reason to...
oppose Ker's (1957: 254) palaeographic dating of the later material being added around 1080. In sum, then, it suffices for our purposes to date the entire D-text, save its last annal to the second half of the eleventh century.

Contenders for the home of MS. D are basically Worcester and York, respectively Northumbrian religious houses subordinate to York. There are many pieces of evidence pointing to and away from either place (cf. Section 2.6.2.5 below for an overview or Cubbin 1996: lvi-lxxxiii for a comprehensive account). To illustrate this highly ambivalent and equivocal body of evidence, consider the direct counterpart to Cubbin’s argument for Worcester given above: Whitelock et al. (1961: xiv) and Whitelock (1979: 115) note that Wulfstan is not mentioned anywhere in D, which is very much at odds with assuming Worcester as its home, since Wulfstan was very much a public figure of great influence and popularity (cf. Mason 2004). The ambiguity of the evidence is further exacerbated by the close ties between the sees of York and Worcester in the eleventh century (cf. section 2.6.2.5 below), which invites the surmise that exchanging documents between the two sees was even easier – and by extension even more common – than elsewhere.

Another potentially worthwhile line of inquiry is whether we can derive indications as to the provenance of D from the material not found elsewhere in the Chronicle. And indeed most of this material deals with Northumbrian matters or even specifically with York (cf. Cubbin 1996: xxxviii). Parallels with the Yorker Historia Regum (cf. Keller 1900: 34) suggest an additional northern source rather than an independent composition of annals. The parallels to these Latin annals tentatively indicate a York origin for the D-Chronicle as well. On the other hand, evidently one specimen each of a southern and a northern Chronicle version was at the collator’s disposal, at least one of which had been necessarily imported from elsewhere. Moreover, given that circulation of manuscripts between scriptoria was common practice (cf Whitelock et al. 1961: xxi), assuming York as place of D’s compilation on this basis alone (i.e. two sources of northern provenance vs one from the south) is not justified.
To cut a long story short, it appears to be impossible to decide between York/Northumbria and Worcester as the origin of the compilation other than by an arbitrary judgement call. This is rather vexing, as the two areas in question happen to be situated well within, respectively without the Danelaw area. Location of manuscripts in relation to this area is highly pertinent as we hypothesise that prolonged, quotidian OE-ON language contact instigated, facilitated, quickened or otherwise positively influenced changes in gender assignment and exponence. However, as D appears to contain very little original material, i.e. material that does not occur in similar form or content elsewhere (cf. below), the wisest course of action appears to be to isolate those (parts of) annals, whose northern provenance is reasonably certain. The following sections attempt to identify this material.

2.6.2. Components of D

What makes placement of MS. D and its parts especially difficult is that it exhibits numerous complex relationships with other extant versions. Plummer (1899[1952]: lxviii) for instance characterises this text as “a highly composite structure”, noting extensive parallels and at times “minute points of agreement, especially in mistakes, which cannot be accidental” with MS. E up to and including annal 890 (cf. Plummer 1899[1952]: lx-lxi, lxiv). Next to the Peterborough Chronicle, the C-text also features numerous parallels with D (cf. Cubbin 1996: xvii-liii).
At the same time, the manuscripts exhibit so many differences in this stretch of annals which make Plummer (1899[1952]: xi) rule out the possibility that one is an immediate or even indirect copy of the other. MSS D and E display another section of annals, 959-1023, with many parallels, but also considerable variation, and even beyond this point, annals 1059, 1064, and 1071-1076 “are, in whole or in part, identical in D and E” (Plummer 1889[1952]: lxiv). The following sections disassemble MS. D into its components as far as this is feasible on the basis of the available evidence.

2.6.2.1. The Alfredian Common Stock and the Northern Recension

Excluding those that have been identified as belonging to the northern recension (cf. below), the bulk of annals up to 890 occur, some variation notwithstanding, in comparable form and contents in all of the extant manuscripts Cubbin (1996: xvii-lv) includes in his considerations.25 Also, it is interesting to note that the blank annals (i.e. those that comprise only a year number but no text) “are virtually the same in all versions” (Cubbin 1996: xvii). Focusing on these extensive congruencies in the Common Stock is unlikely to prove illuminating regarding the development of mediaeval English grammar in general and assignment and exponence of gender in particular.

But, next to this widespread congruence, there are variations in which DE differ from ABC, thus suggesting a closer relation within these groups rather than between them. These deviations of DE from ABC are additions, which suggests that the ancestor of DE was supplemented with information from other sources, and hence constitutes a later edition of the Alfredian Common Stock (cf. Cubbin 1996: xx). These supplements come in different forms: MSS D and E feature a number of annals entirely absent from ABC. The first extra annal enriching the Common Stock is for 155, the last one for 806, with the majority clustering in the eighth century. In addition, DE sport addenda to annals not found in ABC. These occur in annals from 709 to 803, again chiefly augmenting information pertaining to the eighth century. Finally, some annals have been “recast” (Cubbin 1996: xix, xx), meaning that they were reformulated, usually expanded while retaining the propositional content inherited from the Alfredian material. Of these, two each occur among annals for the first and second century, six among those for the eighth, and an additional three pertaining to the ninth (cf. Cubbin 1996: xix-xx). The contents of these different types of addenda, as one might have already deduced from this section’s title, is heavily preoccupied with northern affairs. A

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24 A subsection of this, annals 981-1022, occurs virtually identically in MSS CDE (cf. section 2.5.3 above)
25 MSS G and F he considers “too slight” to be of use and consequently focuses on ABCDE (cf. Cubbin 1996: xvii).
secondary interest is astronomy and, finally “an unexplained (though scarcely inexplicable) interest in Rochester” (Cubbin 1996: xx).26

To complicate matters more, D not only draws on an augmented, ‘northernised’ variant of the Alfredian Common Stock it shares with E as shown above, but at the same time also uses an ancestor of ABC. This is apparent in annals 731, 801 and 855, which are obviously a conflation of the two sources (cf. Cubbin 1996: xxvi). Consider the following example.

Annal 731 in D begins with relating the death of archbishop Brihtwold, in parallel to E. E then continues with other matters but D deals with the death of Osric, king of Northumbria, Ceolwulf succeeding him and then notes Brihtwold’s death again. The same sequence of events (i.e. Osric dies, Ceolwulf becomes king, Brihtwold dies) is also found in ABC. This duplication error shows that the compiler of D (or its ancestor) had both a northern and a southern template at his disposal, which he, inexpertly at times, conflated (cf. Cubbin 1996: xxvi).

Another aspect shared by D and E is the inclusion of copious material relating events of northern, or more precisely, Northumbrian origin and interest (the Northern Recension of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, cf. Section 2.1 above and e.g. Plummer 1889[1952]: lxviii-lxii; Whitelock et al. 1961: xv; Whitelock 1979: 113). These decidedly northern annals (or parts of annals) absent from all other extant versions are interspersed from annal 733 onwards up to annal 806 (cf. Plummer 1899[1952]: lxviii-lxix) or even up to annal 1031 (cf. Whitelock 1979: 113).27

As to the precise origin of this material, Plummer (1899[1952]: lxx) reports York, Lindisfarne and Hexham as possible candidates, only to dismiss the lot of them in favour of Ripon, chiefly because one Ripon abbot each is mentioned in annals 785 and 788. Whitelock (1979: 113) judges this evidence “slender” and has “little doubt that the common archetype from which both [i.e. D and E] are derived was compiled at York”. Just like Canterbury was the ecclesiastical hub for the entire south of mediaeval England, so was York the clerical centre of the north.28 As most of the southern Chronicle versions appear to have been at Canterbury for at least some time as far as we can tell almost a full millennium later (cf. Sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 above), it appears plausible that the ones of northern provenance are likely to have some connection to York.

Dating this material is difficult. Obviously the lower age limit for any annals are the years they describe, and since the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was begun in Alfred’s reign, assuming the commencement of a northern vernacular chronicle to have occurred no

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26 Sadly, Cubbin (1996) appears to offer no attempt at motivating this unexpected relative prominence of Rochester in this material.

27 For a full list of these northern materials, consult Section 2.6.3 below and e.g. Cubbin (1996: xix - xxv).

28 York may have shared this role with Lindisfarne for some time, but in any case no longer than until June 793, when the latter place was attacked, plundered, and destroyed by Vikings.
earlier appears reasonable. Also, the Common Stock, or rather a slightly shorter version extending to annal 887, was used by Asser in his *Life of King Alfred* in 893 (cf. Whitelock et al. 1961: xix; Whitelock 1979: 121), which evidences that the Chronicle was in circulation no later than the early 890s and may have been augmented with local material in the ecclesiastical centres of the north, such as York around that time. Whitelock (1979: 127) posits that augmenting of the original Chronicle with northern materials occurred "probably not before the mid-tenth century", although she regrettably does not say how she arrived at this assessment. For an upper limit, the E-text, or, more precisely, its predecessor ceases to be a northern version from annal 1031 onwards, when it reached Canterbury and ceases to show extensive parallels with D for some time (cf. e.g. Whitelock et al. 1961: xiv; Whitelock 1979: 115; Cubbin 1996: lii, lx). Also, the earliest hands in MS. D date to the mid-eleventh century as well (cf. section 2.6.1 above). It follows that the northern material entered the DEF-version of the Chronicle before that. This then gives a rather wide window of no earlier than 900 or 950 and no later than 1050 for dating the origin of the Northern Recension, and the oldest manuscript featuring it, MS. D, dates to the mid-eleventh century as well.

Cubbin (1996: lxxxviii-ciii) provides a scrupulous analysis of spelling variants, obtaining a mixed bag of early and late forms as well as regional and standard West Saxon *Schriftsprache* features. This is to be expected, as D is a conflation of more than one source, and these sources may well have found their way into the extant text by route of intermediate – though unknown – copies. The simplest explanation for this state of affairs is that in the process of copying, some original spellings were preserved, while others were modernised, adapted to the scribe's dialect and/or idiolect or otherwise altered. So even if we knew when the different sources were composed originally, Cubbin's (1996: lxxxviii-ciii) analysis strongly suggests that each scribe participating in the text's transmission left his mark in terms of spelling, so that it would be naïve to assume that this influence would not extend to other aspects of the language as well, such as gender assignment and agreement. Cubbin (1996: cxlvi) cautiously interprets his results in a similar way: "A conservative conclusion would be that we may be dealing with general phonetic or orthographical trends which affected various parts of central or northern England at various times." It seems there is no way of narrowing down the date of the Northern Recension further, apart from in a relative way, by arguing that it most certainly was composed before the following section.

In sum, then, we observe the evidence pointing to York as origin of the Northern Recension to be diverse and converging, hence more compelling than that indicating other points of origin. For the present purpose, a very rough placement ‘somewhere north of the Humber’ would be quite sufficient, thus encompassing not only York, but also Ripon, Hexham, and Lindisfarne. So, only Worcester does not fit this bill, and with
reference to Whitelock et al.’s (1961) and Whitelock’s (1979) explications discussed above, we are quite safe in understanding a Worcester origin of the Northern Recension as comparably improbable.

Dating is more difficult due to the composite nature of D, so we must contend ourselves with a dating of 900-1050, with the Northern Recension arguably pre-dating the following annals, although it remains indeterminate by how much.

2.6.2.2. The ‘First Continuation’, Annals 892-915

While in the annals of the Common Stock and the Northern Recension MSS D and E together differ from ABC (with the exception of a few annals mentioned in the previous section), in this next run of annals, D is oftentimes closer to ABC than to E. Although the material of this ‘first continuation’ occurs in different versions in all the MSS under consideration, at a closer look it becomes apparent that for this period, the northern Chronicle version as it survives in E is comparably impoverished, while ABC provide fuller accounts. MS. D more often than not agrees with the latter rather than with the former (cf. Cubbin: xxviii).

Good evidence supporting that D switches from the northern to the southern version as its primary source for this ‘first continuation’ obtains from the annal numbers: with annal 854, C begins to be one, sometimes two years ahead of the correct year numbers found in A and E, so that 853AE equals 854C. Up to the end of the Common Stock (i.e. 890) D has the correct numbers, from 892 onwards it duplicates C’s erroneous reckoning.29 On the other hand, annal 901 (death of Alfred) is almost identical in D and E, including the annal number, but quite different from the entry shared by A and C (cf. Cubbin 1996: xxviii).

Although these considerations help establish text history and textual relations, they are not very conducive for placing this section, other than demonstrating that the composite nature of D makes partitioning of the document, and subsequent dating and placement of the parts highly challenging. This amalgamation of a northern and a southern strand of the Chronicle may have been compiled at York or elsewhere in Northumbria, but this is conjecture as no new, independent material appears to have been added which could give insight into a likely place of composition.

In any case it is probably impossible to accurately and reliably attribute putative variations in gender assignment and exponence to the authors of the source materials, the compiler collating these sources, or to scribes that may have copied – and hence possibly altered – the extant D-text and/or its ancestors or templates. On the other hand, the material in question occurs in fairly similar form in other Chronicle texts we have at

29 There is no entry for 891 in D.
our disposal, which in turn are less problematic to date and place, so that the net loss
effected by excluding these D-annals is bearable (cf. Section 2.6.3 below)

2.6.2.3. The Mercian Register

As mentioned before (cf. Sections 2.4 and 2.5 above), the Mercian Register is quite
certainly a (part of a) separate document that found its way into some of our surviving
Chronicle MSS. In the surviving form, it contains 17 fairly short annals covering the
years 902 to 924. Unlike in MSS. B and C, the Mercian Register in D is not entered en
bloc, but intertwined with the other material conflated from a southern and a northern
source (cf. Cubbin 1996: xxx-xxxii). This obviously adds a further complication to the
ones discussed above.

The embedding of the Mercian Register has similar characteristics as the conflation
of the Northern Recension and southern, Alfredian Common Stock of the Chronicle,
featuring duplications and omissions: one striking example is the triple account of the
battle of Tettenhall, which D gives a first time in annal 909 in a version as found in B and
C, i.e. obtained from the full version of the Mercian Register, a second time in 910, here
taken from the shorter variant of the Mercian Register as it is found in E, and a third
time in 911, taken from D’s ‘first continuation’ characterised in Section 2.6.2.2 above (cf.
Cubbin xxxii). Mercian Register annals missing from D are: 903, 904, 907, 911, 912, and
916 (cf. Cubbin 1996: xxxi). Finally, Cubbin (1996: xxxi) interprets the annals 925 and
926 in D as a possible continuation of the Mercian Register. While this interpretation is
consistent with the change in quality and quantity of annal contents after this point (see
Section 2.6.2.4 below), the annals in question relate Northumbrian rather than Mercian
events. Also, no other extant version of the Mercian Register contains this material, but
some of it is reflected in the Latin Historia Regum and could thus easily originate thence
(cf. Cubbin 1996: xxxi). On the other hand, these two annals relate dealings of King
Æthelstan, resulting in the – albeit preliminary – unification of all England under Anglo-
Saxon rule (cf. e.g. Stenton 1943[1989]: 340; Foot 2004) and are hence of general,
national interest. Origin in time and space remains indeterminate, and inclusion of these
two annals in a northern sample is hence unjustified. These similar characteristics of
compilation, or rather conflation, generate problems very parallel to the ones identified
in Section 2.7.3 below, so that for the same reasons we deem this section unsuitable for
analysis.

2.6.2.4. Tenth-Century Annals (934-1016)

After annal 926 and up to annal 981, the text differs substantially from what it relates up
to that point. Most noticeably, the annals are fewer and shorter, to the effect that the
entries covering this half-century contain no more text than those covering the last
decade of the ninth century; both groups contain some 1700 words. Also, parallels
between extant MSS are confined to phrases rather than annals or even groups of
annals, so that coincidental similarity cannot be excluded (cf. Cubbin 1996: xxxii). In a
nutshell, what is and what is not entered into the different Chronicle versions “is
apparently haphazard” (Cubbin 1996. xxxii).

This section of D is apparently conflated from ancestors or relatives of C and E, just
as the preceding sections are, aside from the Mercian Register, of course. Cubbin (1996:
xxxvi-xxxviii) provides interesting evidence for this hypothesis: of the roughly 1700
words contained in this section, about 1300 also occur in C and/or E, while only circa
400 are peculiar to D. Given that all our Chronicle MSS are sketchy in their coverage of
this period, this is quite convincing. Moreover, C and D share material in annals 934-946,
but not beyond, while congruencies between D and E only appear in annals 954-981.
The correspondence of this latter stretch of annals in D and E is almost verbatim; D
features only a small amount of material not in E, comprising a little more than 100
words altogether. Differences are almost entirely confined to slight spelling variations.

The most conservative interpretation for the at times very close parallels between D
and C in annals 934-946 and for the analogous congruency of D and E in annals 954-981
seems that the relation between the three MSS in this section is no different than before,
with D using alternately a proto-C and a proto-E text (cf. Cubbin xxxix). This of course
entails the same problems encountered above: it is difficult to ascertain where the
source(s) for these annals originate as well as when, where, how often, and how
faithfully they were copied. However, as this portion is very similar in all three extant
manuscripts, frequent intermittent copying is unlikely, so that the material as it survives
might be fairly close to the original.

The contents of the material shared only by D and E is not particularly suggestive of
northern origin: the events reported are of fairly general interest; references to places
inside the Danelaw area are present, but few: Northumbria (954), Westmorland (966),
and, as a borderline case, Chester (972). Northumbria is mentioned in view of royal
succession, Westmorland in context of a military campaign, and Chester in relation to
the aftermath of King Edgar’s coronation, all arguably of superregional, national
significance. By contrast, references to Wessex and Kentish places are more numerous
and of less general interest. Assuming a northern origin for this material is hence not
warranted.

By contrast, the annals in between (943-952) show overlap with neither C nor E, but
relate only Northumbrian events. Thus, they are more likely to be northern than
southern in origin and may enter the sample of northern Chronicle material for analysis.
However, these annals are not reliably datable any more precise than the years they
refer to at the earliest and the mid-eleventh century at the latest, which is rather too large a timeframe.

The remaining annals 981-1016 occur in virtually identical form also in E as well as C. Both their contents and their occurrence in MS. C show that these are most certainly not of northern origin (cf. Section 2.5.2 above). Hence, D’s tenth-century material of reasonably certain northern origin comprises no more than annals 947-952, datable no more accurately than some time in between the years they refer to and about 1050, when D was written.

2.6.2.5. Eleventh-century Annals

In annal 1016, a change of scribe occurs in mid-word, beginning with the words feaht him wið ealla Engla þeode (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxiii), after the second scribe ended with ge-. This change of scribe coincides with a new page of different material, which appears to have been added rather later, possibly after decades, to replace lost or damaged writing (cf. Cubbin 1996: xlv). Moreover, the replacement sheets, which contain the annals up to and including 1052 (cf. Cubbin 1996: x), are devoid of decoration, unlike the surrounding pages (cf. Cubbin 1996: lii). This suggests that a new cohort of annals begins here, possibly written elsewhere. Cubbin (1996: xlv-xlvii) notes that this third scribe “is far from conservative, as is clear from the comparatively large number of innovations by D in a fairly short section”, which starkly contrasts with the very exact copying of the first two scribes, as evidenced by the comparably little variation between manuscripts in the previous sections.

This joint occurrence of suddenly absent decoration, a new scribe, a different type of leaves, and the apparently more innovative handling of the material indicates a change in scribal tradition, possibly brought about by the passage of time, or the manuscript having been taken to another place, or both. Also, while the annals of the mid-tenth century tended to be brief and formulaic, these annals are typically long and elaborate (cf. Cubbin 1996: xlviii). This statement, however, needs some qualification: a survey of the text reveals that the short, one-line annals cluster in the period following the Mercian Register (i.e. from annal 924) up to the latest tenth-century annals, but not quite to the point where we observe the changes in scribe, writing material, and innovativeness. Annal 992 for instance takes up 15 manuscript lines, and the entry for 1016 is more than a hundred lines long, with the change of scribe and page only occurring in line 84. In light of this, the increase in quantity and quality of contents does not really coincide with the change of scribe and the other changes reported above. This, in addition to the replacement leaves, different scribes and no decoration from the end

30 The first scribe’s writing extends up to the lacuna 262-693, after which we find the writing of scribe 2 (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxii).
of annal 1016 to annal 1052 inclusive, compel us to understand this sequence as distinct from the preceding and following material.

In terms of contents, this section exhibits many parallels with the E-text up to annal 1031, after which it is independent of E up to 1052 (cf. Whitelock 1979: 117) but corresponds to the C-text in most of the material contained in these subsequent annals, which Cubbin (1996: lii-liii) interprets as D (or an ancestor of D) having used both an ancestor or relative of C and one of E as source materials. Given the extensive parallels with C and E throughout MS. D, this is a plausible interpretation. The parallels with E in the original as well as the replacement sections also mean that a precursor of E, extending to 1031, featured twice in D’s construction: once when the original conflation was crafted, and once again, later presumably, when the replacements were inserted (cf. Cubbin 1996: lii-liii).

Next to a pronounced interest in northern affairs, Worcester features quite prominently from 1030 onwards in the material concerned (cf. e.g. Whitelock et al. 1961: xv). This circumstance has hitherto been utilised by advocates of Worcester as the origin of the Northern Recension – from 972 to 1016 and from 1060 to 1062 the archbishop of York was also bishop of Worcester. However, Whitelock et al. (1961: xv) point out that this argument works just as well in reverse. Possibly even better, as the Northern Recension takes immense interest in Aldred, archbishop of York from 1061 to 1069 and bishop of Worcester from 1046 to 1061, but makes no mention of his Worcester successor St Wulfstan, who in turn features prominently in writings of definite Worcester provenance. “If ‘D’ originated in Worcester, its failure to mention Wulfstan would be strange” (Whitelock et al. 1961: xv). Finally, in the northern material York, not Worcester, is referred to using the generic ceaster “the city”,31 which also indicates the author of this material to have been at or near York rather than Worcester (cf. Whitelock 1979: 113).32

Among the annals leading up to the Norman Conquest, 1053-1063 are peculiar to D and display an articulate interest in Worcester (cf. Cubbin 1996: liii), while those for 1065 and 1066 appear to be a combination of those found in C and E. The remainder of entries has no parallel in the extant Chronicle MSS, with the exception of 1073, which is in parts reflected in E.

However, given that these annals show no compelling signs of contemporary production and hence could easily have been written not appreciably earlier than the

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31 Whitelock (1979) is not entirely specific whether this applies to E or D or both. A brief search of the relevant texts reveals that D uses a non-compounded form of ceaster just once, as a proper noun, in 762 relating Friþuweald’s death, where it refers to Chester, not York. MS. E, on the other hand, frequently refers to York with forms of the generic ceaster.

32 A very similar phenomenon can be observed in the Peterborough Chronicle Continuations, where Peterborough consistently is referred to with the generic burh “town” (cf. Sections 2.7.3 and 2.7.4 below).
Continuations of MS. E (Section 2.7 below), it appears best to concentrate on the ninth- and tenth-century annals, which are quite certain to be no younger than the 1050s.

2.6.3. Northern Components in D

From the deliberations above we can arrive at a share of annals and parts of annals whose northern provenance is somewhat likely, evidenced by having parallels that occur only in E, or other historical documents of northern origin, such as Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* or *Historia regum Anglorum et Dacorum* ascribed to Simeon of Durham (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: lxviii; Whitelock et al. 1961: xiv; Cubbin 1996: xix) and/or being absent from the southern versions ABC. However, parallels with Bede's magnum opus are not very revealing, as the Common Stock, quite doubtlessly of southern origin, likewise makes ample use of this material.

To begin with the Northern Recension, i.e. the Common Stock augmented with northern materials, there are a number of complete annals found in DE, yet absent from ABC. These are: 155, 693, 697, 699, 702, 727, 735, 741, 757, 765, 766, 768, 776, 778, 780, 782, 788, 789, 791, 793, 795, 798, and 806. Sections of annals shared by D and E, yet absent from the southern versions A, B, and C are given in Table B5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents peculiar to DE in annal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bishop Wilfred buried in Ripon 709</td>
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<td>Bishop Iohannes buried in Beverley 721</td>
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<td>Ine 725</td>
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<td>Ceolwulf 729</td>
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<td>Acca, bishop of Hexham 733</td>
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<td>Ecgberht, bishop of York 734</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northumbrian matters 737</td>
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<td>Bishop of York and astronomy 744</td>
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<td>Northumbrian matters 759</td>
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<td>Ceolwulf's death 760</td>
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<td>Assassination in Northumbria 761</td>
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<td>Northumbrian ecclesiastical matters 762</td>
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<td>Northumbrian matters 774</td>
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<td>Bishop of Whithorn 777</td>
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<td>Pope Hadrian 785</td>
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<td>Wars in Northumbria 794</td>
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<td>Offa and bishop of York 796</td>
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<td>Northumbrian ecclesiastical matters 797</td>
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<td>Astronomy 800</td>
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<td>Astronomy 802</td>
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<td>Bishop of Lindisfarne 803</td>
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Table B5: Northern additions to the Common Stock annals in D, witnessed by E (adapted from Cubbin 1996: xix).
In the annals 892–915, E is sparse and D chiefly follows its second, southern template, which was most likely an ancestor of C (cf. Section 2.6.2.2 above). In this stretch of annals, the only point where D and E together differ from the southern versions A, B, and C is the beginning of annal 901, reporting Alfred’s death and the succession of Edward the Elder. Although almost identical, these annal beginnings in MSS. DE display a few slight differences, one of which, incidentally, evidences variation in gender assignment. Examples (1) and (2) below reproduce the passages concerned, with the relevant gender exponents and controlling nouns underlined for ease of identification.

(1) 901D Her gefor Ælfred cyning vii Kalendas Novembris and heold
Here departed Alfred king 7 calends November and held
þone rice xxviii wintra and healf gear, an þa feng
that.MASC realm.NEUT 28 winters and half year and then took
Ædweard his sunu to rice.
Edward his son to realm.

(2) 901E Her gefor ælfred cyning vii kalendæ Novembris & he heold
Here departed Alfred king 7 calends November and he held
þet rice xxviii wintra & healf gear & þa feng
that.NEUT realm.NEUT 28 winters and half year. And then took
Ædward his sunu <to> rice.
Edward his son to realm.

‘Here departed King Alfred on October 26th, and he reigned for 28 years and a half, and then his son Edward became king.’

The pertinent word here is of course *rice* and the different agreement of the preceding demonstrative it triggers in the two variants: by Old English standards, i.e. according to its lexical system of gender assignment, this noun requires its modifiers to be neuter. Seen from the perspective of the emergent referential system of assigning gender, we would also expect neuter modifiers, because the referent is abstract, thus necessarily neutral/sexless and hence to be modified by a neuter determiner. The variant from E, given as example (2), fulfils both requirements, but that in D, showcased as example (1), has *rice* modified by the masculine *þone*, which is compatible with neither system.34

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33 In fact, Alfred’s death and Edward’s succession to the throne occurred in 899 CE rather than in 901 as reported in all extant Chronicle MSS (cf. Miller 2004; Wormald 2006).

34 D’s unexpected use of a masculine demonstrative could be explained along the lines of Jones (1967a, 1967b, 1988), in that *þone* ceased to mark masculine accusative singular and was refunctionalised, or rather generalised to mark accusative/object case, regardless of gender or number. However, a single
As Siemund & Dolberg (2011), Dolberg (2012), and Dolberg (2013a) show, such cases of undirected erroneous gender reassignment occur noticeably frequently in the twelfth-century annals of the Peterborough Chronicle and evidence noise or entropy in a system that is in the process of reorganisation. This is a parallel case, and if more of this kind obtains from the analysis of D’s northern components, this then would indicate the change from lexical to referential gender to have commenced in the north no later than these northern components were conflated into D. That this case of gender reassignment occurred in the process of conflating sources (i.e. around 1050) rather than while the source was composed is evident from the fact that E differs. For an interpretation that gender reassignments occurred in the source materials already, we would need reassignments that are shared by D and E.

For the tenth century, congruencies with E do not lend themselves as indicators for material of northern origin, since E’s coverage of this period is scant. However, Cubbin (1996: lxii) finds a number of annals dealing with northern affairs that occur in comparable form in other texts of northern provenance, and are absent from C, an ancestor of which was D’s primary source for this period (cf. Section 2.6.2.4 above). These annals are 943, 947, 948, and 975.

Plummer (1899[1952]: lxx) gives annal 948 as evidence to tie the D-text to Ripon, and Whitelock (1954: 29) uses it for her theory of D originating from York. As both places are north of the Humber, we can fairly confidently understand them as northern material. A less clear-cut case are the annals 952, 954, and 957: Cubbin (1996: lxii) reports these as having no parallels in other surviving manuscripts, but they nevertheless betray a strong interest in northern affairs; Cubbin (1996: lxiii) notes that in the tenth century entries, there is only one annal exclusive to D that is devoid of northern interests, which lets him argue that virtual absence of southern matters in material exclusive to D implies a northern focus. Since any indication to the contrary is wanting, we shall include said three annals on the basis of Cubbin’s (1996: lxiii) argument.

In the early eleventh century, before the replaced section begins towards the end of 1016, there are two instances suggesting northern influence: in 1010, *scipon*, a late West Saxon dative plural of “ship” – the sWS form is *scipum* – is changed to *Ripon* in D while all other Chronicles retain *scipon*. This is most likely a copying error, probably by the scribe of D, which tells us that he must have known of Ripon in order to be able to make this mistake (cf. Cubbin 1996: lxiii). This then points to a northern origin for the compilation of D, but says nothing about the origin of its sources. It furthermore invites the surmise data point does not constitute evidence. Section 3.3.2 assess Jones’ analyses and postulates in depth, and Section 7.5 provides a more parsimonious explanation.

35 This one case is annal 958, on archbishop Oda divorcing Eadwig (then king of Mercia) and Ælfgifu because of consanguinity.
that phonetic attrition of unstressed syllables might have begun earlier and/or spread faster in the south as compared to the north, as northern material only evidence phonetic attrition rather later. At any rate, it is one of the very few differences in the otherwise virtually identical stretch of annals 983-1016 in MSS CDE (cf. Section 2.5.2).

In the replaced section 1016-1052, only D relates the Archbishop of York visiting Rome (annal 1026) and the Bishop of Durham being consecrated in York in annal 1041 (cf. Cubbin 1996: lxiv). As these short notices are absent from the southern MSS. and deal with the ecclesiastical hub of the north, assuming a northern origin is defensible. A third indication of northern provenance obtains from Whitelock (1954: 28), who notes the phrase *ealne þisne norðende* in annal 1052, which features the proximal demonstrative (*þisne*) instead of the distal one (*þone*) betraying a northern point of view. Cubbin (1996: lxiii) dismisses this on the basis that the replaced section of annal 1016 sports a distal demonstrative in the phrase *to þam norðdaele*.

However, his dismissal is hardly justified for at least two reasons: first, it is not given that the replaced section bases on one template only, which is a prerequisite for Cubbin’s (1996: lxiii) argument to be valid, especially as he contrasts entries from either end of the replaced section. Second, and more importantly, the proximal demonstrative is marked, in the sense that it is far less frequent than the distal one, which also – probably chiefly – functions as a definite article without any noticeable demonstrative force. Hence, while the use of the proximal demonstrative in 1052 does suggest a northern origin, usage of the distal one in 1016 is no indication to the contrary. Furthermore, annal 1052 is blank in A and the ones in C and E – whose predecessor at that time was very probably at Canterbury (cf. Section 2.7 below and e.g. Cubbin 1996: lii) – are quite different from the one in D. Given that the writers of D’s replaced section far more readily adapted and altered the material of their sources compared to the scribes of this version’s other sections (cf. Section 2.6.2.5 above), it is likely that the northern perspective evidenced by the phrase Whitelock (1954: 28) bases her argument on would not have been included in our present D-text if the scribe responsible had deemed it inappropriate with regard to his location.36 On this basis, these annals up to 1052 are likely to be of northern origin, yet of uncertain age: certainly no older than 1052, but probably rather much more recent, so that they would count as late within-Danelaw Old English. However, for this time period the comparatively contemporary Continuations in MS. E provide the better evidence (cf. Section 2.7.5 below).

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36 The Canterbury scribe of MS. F did exactly this and changed *hider* “hither” to *þider* “thither” (cf. Baker 2000: 38; Irvine 2004: xxxvii)
In sum, then, the exertions above endow us with apparently northern material extracted from MS D, summarised in Table B6 above.

2.7. MS. E “Peterborough Chronicle” (Bodleian Library, MS. Laud 636)

The Peterborough Chronicle differs in a number of respects from the Chronicle versions discussed above. It is not only one of the youngest versions of the Chronicle that survived – written, or rather copied most probably between 1116 and 1121 at Peterborough (cf. Whitelock 1979: 115; Irvine 2004: xiii) – but also the one that extends furthest: all manuscripts save two end before or shortly after the Norman Conquest (cf. Bergs & Skaffari 2007: 6).

Only the E-manuscript extends into the twelfth century; the next youngest, the bilingual F version (cf. Section 2.8 below), was composed from a common archetype around the same time (cf. Whitelock 1979: 115), yet ends mutilated in annal 1058 (cf. Plummer...
1899[1952]: xxxvi). Figure B6 above illustrates Peterborough, the origin of the Laud manuscript, to be well inside the Danelaw area. The entire text of this Chronicle version is divisible into four parts and was written by just two scribes. The first scribe contributed three components of the present text: he copied all the material up to and including annal 1121 from a template or templates that did regrettably not survive, he interpolated this material with information of local or general interest, and he wrote and possibly also composed the annals 1122-1131. The second scribe contributed the fourth principal part of this manuscript, the entries 1132-1154. The first continuation (1122-1131) displays changes in the colour of the ink as well as in the appearance of the writing, suggesting piecemeal and contemporary continuation of the Chronicle, while Scribe 2 appears to have added his material in one fell swoop, as variation in colour and script are absent (cf. Irvine 2004: xviii-xix). The following sections scrutinise each of these four parts and assess whether and to what extent they can usefully contribute to this study’s database.37

2.7.1. The Copied Stock, Preface to Annal 1121

The first principal component of the Peterborough MS. is further divisible into more or less distinct sections. For the ensuing analysis, it is important to bear in mind that any statements regarding dating and placement of the material up to 1021 remain rather tentative, as this entire text was copied by the first of the two Peterborough scribes, who could have modernised or otherwise altered the material. However, this scribe appears not to have done so: Clark (1970: xx) reports that the extant E-text corresponds very closely to the Latin Waverley Annals, strongly suggesting a faithful reproduction of the common original: “This is borne out by the consistent linguistic differences between the copied annals and the Peterborough interpolations in the same hand.” These differences are regular and pertain to all levels of linguistic analysis (cf. Clark 1970 xvii).

This assessment justifies an analysis of the copied stock’s subsections for likely places and times of production, although we are well advised to be very careful in doing so, because the Peterborough Chronicle up to 1121, although having been copied in one fell swoop by a single scribe, is a composite document, pieced together in various stages from various sources, some of them quite possibly in Latin. Both the E-text’s template as well as the sources that contributed to it over time did not survive. Therefore, we can neither ascertain through how many stages of copying and redacting E’s template as well as its contributing sources went, nor whether and to what extent the unknown

37 This manuscript also contains a total of 38 annals in Latin, interspersed throughout the manuscript up to annal 1062, suggesting that they were added at Canterbury (cf. section 2.7.1.5 below). This Latin material has obviously no bearing on the questions at hand and is hence ignored. For a characterisation of these Latin annals, consult Irvine (2004: lxxxviii-xc).
scribes involved preserved the language of their original or modernised it, nor assess the likelihood or severity of possible Latin contamination.

As a consequence, we can only very roughly date and place each of the subsections we scrutinise below, since placement in most cases relies on indirect evidence, such as textual prominence of places. Dating is even more problematic, the text has been copied at least once, hence palaeographic evidence – e.g. letter forms, layout, margin notes, decoration, etc. – is no longer available, and we thus need to resort to more indirect and imprecise methods, for instance use the type and amount of detail as an indicator for contemporariness: the less detail contained in an annal, the further in time from the event described it was presumably written. But obviously, richness or poverty of detail, terseness or verbosity of an annal does not entail contemporary, respectively much later composition, it only implies it; there are obviously many other reasons for writing lengthy or brief annals. Ultimately, we may hence achieve no more than educated guesses. The first of these subsections is the aforementioned Common Stock of annals, which ranges from the first entry for 60 BCE up to and including annal 890.

2.7.1.1. The Common Stock and the Northern Recension

This Common Stock features in all extant Chronicle manuscripts in different, though recognisably similar forms (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xciv; Bately 1980b; Irvine 2004: xxxvi).

These annals in E are augmented with additional material chiefly of northern interest and, presumably, provenance (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899 [1952]: lx-i-lxii; Cubbin 1996: xx; Irvine 2004: xxxvi). This additional material is also contained in MS D. (cf. Section 2.6.2.1 above) and MS. F (cf. Section 2.8 below), to the effect that MSS DEF form the Northern Recension (cf. Section 2.1), while MSS. ABC contain the Alfredian Common Stock only. The added northern material absent from ABC, but present in DEF derives in parts from other extant sources of northern origin, such as Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* or the *Historia regum Anglorum et Dacorum* ascribed to Simeon of Durham (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: lxvii; Whitelock et al. 1961: xiv; Cubbin 1996: xix; Irvine 2004: xxxvii). This state of affairs is generally understood as evidencing that D and E share a common ancestor, although differences or errors present in EF and absent from D or vice versa indicate that this common ancestor is not the immediate predecessor of DEF (cf. Irvine 2004: xliii).

Moreover, MS. D is clearly a conflation of a lost version of the Northern Recension and of a Chronicle version similar to the C-text (cf. Section 2.6) and MSS EF. The latter two, which are similar enough in their vernacular contents to indicate a common
ancestor not shared by D,\textsuperscript{38} have the more accurate representation of these northern sources (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899:[1952]: lx-lxiv; Whitelock 1954: 29-29; Cubbin 1996: xxvi-xxvii; Irvine 2004: xxxviii). Plummer (1899:[1952]: xxxviii) characterised the relation of F to E as “that of a bilingual epitome”, an assessment that appears to have been universally accepted ever since. The intricate relationship between MSS D, E and F is further complicated by the fact that the scribe of F, in a “habit of revising manuscripts” (Irvine 2004: xix), also interpolated MS. A with material taken from a predecessor of E and possibly also other sources (cf. Section 2.2.3 above as well as Irvine 2004: xl-xliii).

An especially interesting subsection of the Common Stock/Northern Recension in E (and by extension also F) are the annals 262-693, as these are in lacuna in D (cf. Section 2.6.2.1 above). Although the ancestor of both extant versions of the Northern Recension covering this period went through the F-scribe’s editing hands, he appears to have been “remarkably restrained” in editing this ancestor, possibly because he perceived it as authoritative (Irvine 2004: xliii). For the present purpose, those entries that do not feature in the Common Stock (i.e. those absent from ABC) are of particular interest, since they represent northern material only present in E and F. As many entries in F were abbreviated and reworded by its Canterbury scribe, E has the more original reading (cf. Irvine 2004: xliii-xliv). Complete annals occurring in EF only are 286, 423, 583, 624, 655, 667, and 681, of which the first three were also interpolated into A, with 286EF = 283A (cf. Irvine 2004: xliv).

As these annals comprise of comparably little material, a wise course of action for creating a Northern Recension database would be to sample the E text extensively, as it is superior to both D and F, the other two extant exponents of the Northern Recension: F is heavily edited and abbreviated (cf. Section 2.8 below and e.g. Irvine 2004. xliii-xlvi) and D is a conflation of a northern and a southern template (cf. Section 2.6 above). The section in MS. E missing from MS. D for example contains about 2000 words, roughly two thirds of that contained in Scribe 2’s contribution (annals 1132-1154). This section also contains annals exclusive to E, to wit 617, 626, 634, and 684 as well as other material not found elsewhere in the Chronicle MSS. These additions chiefly are but short phrases (cf. Irvine 2004: lv-lvi). Beyond the period lost from D, the Laud manuscript has some exclusive material relating northern events in annals 627, 633, 641 643, 654, 664, 678, 679, and 685 (cf. Irvine 2004: lvii).

Having identified material of probable northern origin, the question of dating this material arises. Very little is known, apart from fairly busy copying and circulation of manuscripts shortly after 890, evidenced by textual relationships of the early Chronicle material and related manuscripts (cf. Whitelock 1979: 121-122). This gives us a lower

\textsuperscript{38} MS. F contains next to vernacular annals also a Latin translation of this material (cf Section 2.8 below).
limit for the northern annals having entered the Chronicle, although the Northern Recension’s sources pre-date the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but these sources were in Latin rather than English, such as Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, completed in the first half of the eighth century (cf. Irvine 2004: xliiv).

Thus, assuming the early tenth century as a lower limit appears defensible. As for an upper limit, things are more difficult: The copied part of the E-text is generally characterised as “Standard Late West Saxon” (Clark 1970: xliiv), which does, however, not imply that it is of West Saxon origin, but rather that it is written in the “classical” West Saxon orthography”, which, by the end of the tenth century, had become a standardised Schriftsprache used nationwide and remained so for almost 150 years (cf. e.g. Clark 1970: xlii). On the basis of this alone, we would obtain a dating of about 900-1130, which is not much help. However, we know that the proto-E was in Canterbury in the late eleventh century, where it served as a source for MSS A and F (cf. e.g. Irvine 2004: xlv; Home 2007:15), and Baker (2000: lxxvi) dates the F-text’s production to 1100 x 1107. Also, an archetype of E was used to compile MS. D in the second half of the eleventh century (cf. Irvine 2004: lviii). Therefore, the present group of annals must have been completed before that, i.e. in the mid-eleventh century or earlier.

Hence, the Northern Recension (and, by extension, the rest of the copied part) might not be removed further in time from the Peterborough material than half a century. Such a short difference in time, though, is unlikely considering the fact that the language of the Peterborough annals and interpolations differs very much from that of the copied material (cf. Clark 1970: xli-lxiv as well as Sections 2.7.2, 2.7.3 and 2.7.4 below).

2.7.1.2. Annals 892-981

Coverage of tenth-century events in the Northern Recension is scanty, excluding the D-text, which, being a conflation of a northern and a southern template, relies heavily on its second, southern source (cf. Sections 2.6.2.2, 2.6.2.3, and 2.6.2.4 above). For this ninety-year period, the Peterborough Chronicle offers merely thirty-six annals, and the F-text has even less coverage, as it remains basically an abridged copy of E’s predecessor augmented with Latin translations (cf. e.g. Clark 1970: xviii; Irvine 2004: lviii).

E, as the most comprehensive of our northern manuscripts, contains a little less than 14,500 words up to annal 890 whereas the most comprehensive surviving southern Chronicle, A, contains a little less than 9,500. So, while the Northern Recension up to 890 is best conceptualised as an enrichment of the Common Stock, the first half of the section dealt with here (892-952) is rather the opposite: annal 933 and 934 are common to all our manuscripts, though the latter features an additional piece of information in A; annals 940, 944, 945, and 948 occur in a reduced version in DEF compared to ABC, 892 (893 in BCD) is similar in contents (cf. Irvine 2004: lviii-lix). For annal 937, where the
southern versions feature the beautiful and elaborate poem ‘The Battle of Brunanburh’, the E-text is decidedly reticent in providing only one line saying no more than “Here king Æthelstan led an army to Brunanburh.” (my translation).

With the exception of 892, the annals in E are similarly short up to 956. Their contents also features in ABC, next to other material absent from the northern versions. Exempt from this statement are the annals 921, 927, 942, 949, and 952, whose short entries are exclusive to EF (cf. Irvine 2004: lxii). The very long entry for 963 is a Peterborough interpolation in its entirety (cf. Clark 1970: 123; Irvine 2004: lxiii) and is thus dealt with later (cf. Section 2.7.2 below). The remainder of annals (955-981) is of general, national interest, and Irvine (2004: xliv) supposes them to stem from a different source, which appears not to have been at the disposal of those who created ABC. As this putative source is unknown and the relevant annals do not betray a northern interest in their contents, assigning a northern provenance to the annals 955-981 is not warranted. Thus, annals of reasonably certain northern origin in this section are 921, 927, 942, 949, and 952, which are eligible for analysis.

2.7.1.3. Annals 983-1022

What is curious about this set of annals is that it occurs in very similar wording, contents and sequence of events not only in MS. D, which is a conflation of a northern and a southern Chronicle version (cf. Section 2.6), but also in MS. C, which is quite certainly a southern Chronicle without discernible ties to the north (cf. Section 2.5).

This stretch of annals is taken to be based upon “a collection of annals for 983-1022, known as the Chronicle of Æthelred and Cnut” (Irvine 2004: lxv). This Chronicle does not appear to have survived, although Irvine (2004: lxv) reports that a reconstruction is planned by Simon Keynes, which has not yet been published, however. The obvious question hence is whence this source originates. Dumville (1983: 26) reports “strongly anti-Danish views expressed throughout the 1016 annal”, which suggests a Wessex or Kentish origin rather than one from within the Danelaw area.

Also, the aforementioned non-extant Chronicle was annotated with information pertaining to Abingdon and apparently served as a source for MS. C, too, as some of these Abingdon notices also occur in the C-text (cf. Irvine 2004: lxv). This supposed annotating was done either at Abingdon itself, as Dumville (1983: 27-28) as well as Conner (1996: xlvii-xlxi) argue, or at Canterbury, as O’Brien O’Keefe (2001: lxx-1xxxix) proposes, or possibly elsewhere.

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39 Conner’s (1996) notion of an Abingdon ‘house narrative’ is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.5 above.
In sum, the strong anti-Danish stance apparent in 1016 and the notices referring to Abingdon, respectively to the south-west in general (cf. O’Brien O’Keeffe 2001: lxii-lxiv) renders the origin of this material more likely to be southern than northern. Hence, this material is not eligible for a northern sample of Chronicle material.

2.7.1.4. Annals 1023-1043

The somewhat curious parallels between the C-text and the Peterborough Chronicle apparent in the previous section cease for a number of entries, but resurface in annals 1042-1043, which are, spelling variations aside, identical to the ones for 1043-1044 in MS. C. In terms of contents, these two annals relate events of broad national interest or pertaining to Wessex and Kent, with the exception of Stigand being consecrated as bishop of the East Angles. The identity of contents and, for the most part, wording strongly suggests these two annals to come from the same source (or one with a very similar history) as the one discussed in the previous section. Consequently these two are also excluded from the sample of northern materials.

The intermittent annals, by contrast, display next to no similarity with the C-text, a state of affairs that has led to much discussion among Chronicle scholars, summarised by Irvine (2004: lxiv-lxv). The details of this debate need not concern us, relevant for the present purpose is that MS. E quite obviously utilised a source for the annals 1023-1042 that was not at the disposal of the compilers of C: overlap in contents between the two manuscripts are invariably confined to matters of such general interest that they are hard to miss, such as the deaths of the kings Cnut (1035C, 1036E), Harold (1040C, 1039E), and Hartacnut (1042C, 1041E). Also, the wording of these accounts shows no similarity, so that Irvine’s (2004: lxviii, lxix) conclusion that E used material unavailable to the compilers of C for the present section of the Chronicle is well motivated. The fact that C’s annals for this period are either barren or sparse (cf. Irvine 2004: lxviii) makes assuming different sources even more plausible.

These interceding annals 1023-1041 in E feature considerable overlap with those in F, with differences being mainly due to F being abridged (cf. Clark 1970: xviii; Irvine 2004: lxxi). Given the consensus that E and F derive from a common ancestor (cf. e.g. Section 2.7.1.1 above), Irvine’s conclusion that C and E shared a source for 983-1022 and 1042-1043 (1043-1044 in C), but not for the intervening annals 1023-1041 is even more compelling.

As to the origin of this different source, Irvine (2004) seems disinclined to offer a verdict, but the ancestor of E is often cited as ceasing to be a northern Chronicle from annal 1031 onwards, i.e. where MSS D and E begin to go separate ways (cf. e.g.

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40 MS. C has a little additional material not present in E, but this has no bearing on the argument at hand.
Whitelock et al. 1961: xiv; Whitelock 1979: 115; Cubbin 1996: lx). This ancestor reached Canterbury in the middle of the eleventh century, where the F-scribe later used it as his template (cf. e.g. Whitelock 1979: 115). In terms of annal contents, there appears to be little counter-indication against this assessment: E’s annals up to 1031 relate Cnut’s dealings abroad and, given that Cnut was king of all England, are thus of national interest. However, the entry for 1023 relates the transferral of St Ælhfeah’s relics from London to Canterbury, which may rather be considered a local note, and the death of Wulfstan, archbishop of York.41 York is obviously a northern reference, but on the other hand, there are only two English archbishops at a time, and the death of one of them may well be argued to be a matter of national interest.

From 1031 on, the annals’ contents is distinctly focussed on southern affairs, all places mentioned in these annals are outside the Danelaw area, with the exception of one instance in annal 1038, giving an enumeration of bishops that died that year, among them one from East Anglia. Thus, while annals from 1031 on take much local interest in England’s south, those up to 1031 take no noticeable local interest in the north – maintaining that the death of an archbishop is a national rather than local matter. Irvine (2004: lxxvi) suggests these annals to constitute an interpolation replacing a scanty account of the reign of Cnut and his sons as for instance found in C, undertaken somewhat later, when the predecessor of E was at St Augustine’s, Canterbury.

To sum up, positive evidence in favour of northern sources for the annals 1023-1031 is entirely lacking or very thin, depending on how we interpret the brief notice of Wulfstan’s death in 1023. For the remaining annals up to 1043, there appears to be nothing hinting at a northern home of E’s predecessor, while there is plenty of textual evidence in the form of place names, as well as inter-textual evidence in the form of extensive parallels between E and F in this period (cf. Irvine 2004: lxxi-lxxiii) in combination with MS. F being unanimously recognised as a Canterbury book. On this basis, we estimate the likelihood of this section being of northern origin as minimal and hence exclude it from the sample of northern Chronicle material.

2.7.1.5. Annals 1043-1063

The next two decades’ worth of annals continue to show a close relationship with the F-text only, right up to F’s entry for 1058, where it ends in mutilation. The text makes frequent reference to southern places, especially Abingdon and St Augustine’s (Canterbury) occur repeatedly, although the last two annals are devoid of such references: 1061 is in Latin (cf. footnote 37), and 1063 is of general interest. Irvine (2004: lxxvi) notes for this section “considerable knowledge of Kentish events on the

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41 This Wulfstan is the one with the by-name Lupus, author of Sermo Lupi ad Anglos, not the saint (cf. Section 2.6.2.1, fn. 23 above).
part of the author”, which “is also suggestive of at least a south-east origin for its composition.”

Overlaps between this Chronicle and MSS C and D are rare and confined to notices of deaths and accessions, i.e. very general information not indicative of an immediate common source of CDE (cf. Irvine 2004: lxxvi). Moreover, in those parts where E overlaps with C and/or D, the text of F – where available – is closer to E than either C or D (cf. Irvine 2004: lxxix). More extensive parallels in contents obtain only from Latin annals, such as the Waverley Annals or Huntingdons Historia Anglorum (cf. Clark 1970: xix-xx, Irvine 2004: lxxix-1xxx), but the origin of these, as far as can be ascertained, is also outside the Danelaw area, to wit Waverley (Wessex) and Lincoln (Kent).

For the remainder of annals beyond 1057, Clark (1970: xix) reports E to share some entries with D until the latter ends with annal 1079.\(^{42}\) Irvine (2004: lxxxi-lxxxii) makes a similar observation and concludes that E and D share a common source, albeit one “at some remove from either manuscript.” However, this does not say much about the origin of this source, let alone about the place of composition of E’s predecessor. An assessment of the text reveals it to relate events of general and southern ecclesiastical interest; all save one are concerned with the succession of popes, archbishops, bishops and abbots. The exception is a note on the brothers Harold and Tosty invading Wales, killing its king Griffin. All these entries are rather short, and apart from dates supplied for some of the clerics’ deaths, the level of detail is low. Brevity, focus on clerics’ deaths and successions, and lack of detail does not suggest a contemporary production or a specific place of origin. Those places referred to, however, are invariably located in Wessex or Kent – or on the continent, so that on the basis of textual evidence a southern place of production appears more likely, quite possibly some time after the related events. This analysis falls into line with the assessments by Plummer (1899[1952]: xlviii-l) and Whitelock (1954: 30), who both give St Augustine’s as place of production for E’s annals 1023-1061. This assessment also dovetails well with Whitelock et al.’s (1961: xviii) observation that “E has a strong bias in favour of Godwine and his family […] and Godwine was earl of Kent”. In sum, a rather southern than northern focus and mention of St Augustine’s suggests a southern origin, which renders this stretch of annals unsuitable for building a sample of northern material.

2.7.1.6. Annals 1064-1080

As mentioned above, this section sports some agreement with MS. D, from which Clark (1970: xix) as well as Irvine (2004: lxxxii) deduce that the two texts utilised a common source. Northumbria features fairly prominently in these annals and reference to St

\(^{42}\) MS. D in fact has one additional, later entry for 1130 mislabelled as 1080 (cf. Section 2.6 above).
Augustine’s, prominent in the preceding group of annals, is absent, suggesting that the shared source for this section is “a set of northern annals” (Irvine 2004: lxxxii).

However, E also contains northern material absent from D and vice versa, which invites the surmise that either this common source was not a direct ancestor of E and D, and/or that there were more than one source, which partially overlapped (cf. Irvine 2004: lxxxiv). Next to some parallels with the D-manuscript, there is considerable parallelism between the Latin Waverley Annals and the Peterborough Chronicle, to the effect that whenever D and E differ, the Waverley Annals agree with E, not D (cf. Irvine 2004: lxxxiv). As Waverley is in Wessex, this close correspondence ties E’s predecessor to the south, despite its northern contents. It also shows that whoever wrote the annals at hand into this ancestor did so rather meticulously; otherwise the parallels to the Waverley Annals would be hard to explain. Moreover, the archetype of E must have been at Canterbury in the early twelfth century, as the F-scribe used it then to compose F and to interpolate A (cf. Section 2.2.3 above and e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xcix-xcix; Whitelock 1954: 27; Whitelock et al. 1961: xxi; Clark 1970: xxi).

With this in mind, the weakest hypothesis appears to be that E’s predecessor remained at Canterbury in the meantime. This makes for a difficult situation with regard to the northern character of E in this section: a presumably southern scribe entered a presumably northern text into the manuscript, the parallelisms with the Latin Waverley Annals only tell us that he was meticulous in doing so in terms of contents, but says nothing about whether he preserved, modernised or otherwise altered the language of his source, if indeed this source was in English rather than Latin.

Even though there was a remarkable vernacular writing culture in England from the time of Alfred the Great until the Norman Conquest at least, documents in Latin continued to be produced in England throughout the Middle Ages. If there ever was a predominance of English over Latin in learned writing in general and historiography in particular, this was quite certainly over by the turn of the twelfth century: Simeon of Durham wrote the Historia Regum between 1104 and 1108, Eadmer completed his Historia Novorum in the first quarter of the twelfth century, and also the other great historians of that time, John of Worcester, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon all wrote in Latin, not English (cf. e.g. Brett 1981: 101-126).

Therefore, as the source or sources from which the unknown scribe entered material into E’s ancestor are lost and corresponding material only survives in Latin documents, it appears defensible to posit that this source itself may have well been in Latin, too. If so, this stretch of annals would reflect Canterbury English of the late eleventh century and hence be unsuitable for the present purpose.

As a gedankenexperiment, let us instead choose to believe for the moment that this lost northern source-material was indeed in English. Even so, Clark’s (1970: xx)
assessment that the Peterborough Interpolations differ linguistically from the copied material in E does not help much: if we additionally assume both the unknown scribe – inserting the northern material into a proto-E manuscript – as well as the first Peterborough scribe – generating E from this proto-E text – to have been extremely meticulous and copied their material true to the letter,\textsuperscript{43} we still cannot deduce from this whether the copied material was rather northern or southern in its language use, only that it markedly differed from the idiolect of the Peterborough scribe who copied and interpolated this material about half a century later.

In sum, even when making three additional major assumptions, we cannot satisfactorily establish that this portion of the Peterborough Chronicle is of northern origin other than on the basis of analysing its language, bearing the risk of circular reasoning.\textsuperscript{44} Moreover, it remains unknown where or when these annals were composed, respectively entered into the proto-E text, apart from no earlier than the period they cover (1064-1080) and no later than before the contemporary First Continuation was begun (1121, cf. Section 2.7.3 below). Consequently, this section's origin in time and space is too uncertain to include it in a northern Chronicle sample.

2.7.1.7. Annals 1081-1121

This final section of copied material stands more or less alone, as no Chronicle manuscript hitherto discussed extends this far (D has its final regular entry for 1079 and a brief, supplementary one relating to 1080, cf. Section 2.6.2.5 above). The bilingual F-text, as has been mentioned (cf. Section 2.7 above) might have extended further, but the manuscript suffered mutilation, so that the latest surviving entry is for 1058. However, there is one item of extant Chronicle material that pertains to the twelfth century in terms of contents: a single leaf, designated \textit{British Library MS. Cotton Domitian IX, fol. 9} and commonly referred to as MS. H, features entries for 1113 and 1114. While this fragment evidences that the tradition of vernacular annalistic writing persisted outside Peterborough abbey for at least one generation after England fell to the Normans, this fragment does not contribute to dating and placing this stretch of Peterborough annals, since its contents regrettably shows no overlap with the material in MS. E (cf. Irvine 2004: lxxv).

\textsuperscript{43} This is unlikely in the extreme. Even annals or passages of different manuscripts that are referred to as identical by palaeographs exhibit spelling variation, cf. e.g. examples (1) and (2) above.

\textsuperscript{44} In short, this study seeks to find out whether time and place of production of texts can serve as an explanans for the explanandum of their language use (i.e. gender assignment and exponence). If we now establish the provenance of a text on the basis of its language use, we are likely to fall victim to circular reasoning: we would motivate the explanans (i.e. provenance) through the explanandum (i.e. language use), and then explain the explanandum (language use, i.e. gender exponence and assignment) on the basis of the explanans (i.e. provenance). Fischer (2001: 110) issues a similar caution, but does not seem to consider complementary, non-linguistic lines of evidence.
In contrast to the preceding set of annals, the focus of interest is again southern, implying a southern origin. These annals may have been added to the text of E at Canterbury: a proto-E manuscript appears to have been there before, and as an archbishop’s see and home of two influential religious houses – Christ Church and St Augustine’s – Canterbury is a clear possibility, but other places are conceivable as well.

Irvine (2004: lxxxv) subsumes our standard of knowledge thus: "When or where these annals were combined with the earlier annals now in E is unknown." Home (2007: 24) seconds this in calling this part of the Chronicle “the unlocalized phase”. Dumville (1983: 34-35) as well as Clark (1970: xx-xxiv) review available evidence, scant and circumstantial as it is: Clark (1970: xxi) finds for instance “a slight Westminster (or London) bias” in notes of minor importance, some of which are quite detailed. At the same time, she notes the E-Chronicle to remain silent on other London events of superregional or even national relevance. Dumville (1983: 34-36) rather appears to favour Canterbury as the origin for the eleventh-century material in E, based on textual relationships between E and D, yet he appears disinclined to commit himself either way on the basis of flimsy and contradictory evidence:

The possibilities are that √E [i.e. proto-E] left Christ Church either between 1063 and 1081, to be continued immediately at a new home, or at some point between 1081 and 1121 to be joined to that modern Chronicle as it was being kept up, or that it travelled directly to Peterborough from Canterbury (after the Peterborough fire of 1116) to be the major source of E (with other matter extending from 1065 or 1081 to 1121).

Between these we can hardly adjudicate at present. (Dumville 1983: 35)

Though favouring London rather than Canterbury as the origin for this phase of the E-text, Clark’s (1970: xxii) verdict is in total congruence with Dumville’s: “So, provenance remains indeterminate.”

However, extensive parallel contents obtains, even more than in the previous section, from the Latin Waverley annals (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899: [1952]: liii), leading Irvine (2004: lxxv) to assume that these Latin annals are “a close translation of a version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle similar to E”. Material contained in E is also found in the Latin Chronicles by Henry of Huntingdon, John of Worcester, and William of Malmesbury. In light of this, one might take exception to Irvine’s assertion that the vernacular material was translated into Latin and point out that the close resemblance of E to the Waverley annals (and to a lesser degree also the other three Latin chronicles just mentioned) strongly suggests a common source, but offers no information on whether this source was actually translated into English from Latin or vice versa.

In sum, then, these annals show no particular interest in the north, are of unknown origin, might not even have been originally composed in English as they are witnessed
by Latin sources only, and entered the predecessor of E at a place and time we do not know. Hence, there is no reason to include them into a northern sample of Chronicle material.

2.7.2. The Peterborough Interpolations

The interpolations refer to twenty passages relating to Peterborough, which were incorporated into the inherited text by the first scribe as he copied all the material up to 1121. The passages in question are recognisable as interpolations not only because of their contents, but also by “the distinctively late characteristics of their language” (Irvine 2004: xc).

The interpolations are unique to E, and vary in length from a few words to several pages. Also, they are inserted at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of annals or constitute annals of their own – hence the double entry for 852 (cf. Irvine 2004: xc-xci). The interpolations contain more errors and erasures than the surrounding, copied material, inviting Irvine (2004: xci) to speculate that either the scribe’s templates for this material were of particularly poor quality, and/or that the scribe altered or even translated these templates while writing.

The Peterborough provenance of the interpolations is further evidenced by their relation to other, Latin Peterborough documents, such as charter material, but most notably the Latin history of Peterborough abbey written by Hugh Candidus in the mid-twelfth century (cf. Irvine 2004: xc-xci; King 2004). Hence, the Latin history and the vernacular Chronicle interpolations drew on the same sources rather than the former having been the source of the latter.

As to the dating of these interpolations, some are inserted into the copied material at the time of copying, which is evident where they follow the format of the manuscript, or slightly later, where they sometimes extend into the margins of the page. In both cases, the script is clearly that of Scribe 1 (cf. e.g. Irvine 2004: xci). For the present purpose, we hence take the interpolations as immediately preceding the first Continuation, i.e. written in the early 1120s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annal</th>
<th>Extent</th>
<th>Number of Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>654</td>
<td>On his time ... ricere mid Criste</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>656</td>
<td>On his time væx ... hundseofenti wintra.</td>
<td>1,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>675</td>
<td>On his time þa seonde ... faces he hafe. Amen.</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>686</td>
<td>þæs Cædwala gef ... Theodorus ærcbishop on Cent.</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>777</td>
<td>On þas kinges dæi ... tune Freoricburna hatte.</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>852a</td>
<td>(entire annal)</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>870</td>
<td>7 fordden ealle ... to nan þing.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>963</td>
<td>(entire annal)</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As both dating and placement of the interpolations is very clear, we can incorporate them into the northern sample of Chronicle material. Table B7 above provides an overview of the Peterborough interpolations, which total in 5188 words.

### 2.7.3. The First Continuation

The first continuation of the Peterborough Chronicle comprises of the annals 1122-1131, written by the same scribe who copied the proto-E manuscript and who interspersed this copy with the interpolations discussed in the previous section. That a new component starts with annal 1122 is evident from a number of changes at this point. Peterborough abbey features prominently from here on but had not hitherto – interpolations excepted. This focus is so pronounced to make Clark (1970: xxiv) assert that “it could not have originated elsewhere”. Irvine (2004: ic) is more sceptical and argues that “some of the material of general interest in E’s annals from 1122 onwards may have been copied from a version of the Chronicle which had been continued beyond 1121 at a centre other than Peterborough”. This is a valid objection in principle, and Irvine’s (2004: ic) proposed alternative is clearly conceivable, however she does not provide any evidence pointing to this unnamed, hypothetical centre or even evidence just pointing away from Peterborough.

Moreover, accepting Irvine’s (2004: ic) proposal would entail making a number of additional assumptions: we would have to postpone the consensual time of proto-E’s arrival at Peterborough (1121 or shortly afterwards) an indefinite period of time, which would make it difficult to account for the relatively close contemporariness of the first continuation’s annals (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxv; Clark 1970: xxv). Alternatively we must assume an additional, no-longer extant Chronicle manuscript still being actively
maintained in English at some unidentified ecclesiastical centre, a full two generations after the Norman Conquest, which had demoted English as a language of prestige and learning in favour of Latin and Norman French. In addition, there appears to be no inconsistency in the first continuation’s East Midland dialect, as both Clark (1970: xli) as well as Irvine (2004: ci) herself note. Hence, this hypothetical unnamed centre must have been very close to Peterborough indeed, so that in terms of provenance the difference for the present purpose would be negligible.

Alternatively, the hypothetical chronicle was in Latin. This appears more likely, given the political and hence linguistic climate at the time. An additional Latin source in the way Irvine appears to imagine it, however, would be of no consequence for us, the first scribe of the E manuscript (or a collaborator) would then have had to translate it, which would endow us with authentic 1120s Peterborough English, possibly contaminated by Latin interference. As a final point speaking against this hypothetical additional, unknown source consider Clark’s (1970: xxvii) observation regarding the style of narration up to and after 1121: “Whereas the annals for the previous decade had been terse, those from 1122 onwards are full and lively”.

By contrast, nothing appears to necessitate or even suggest Irvine’s (2004) assumption of an additional source for the first continuation. Hence, we follow Occam’s razor as it dictates to accept the theory which fits the available evidence while making the fewest assumptions; and that is, pending new evidence, to not assume another source of unknown provenance.

In fact, parallels with other extant sources are generally so vague or confined to such small stretches of texts and relate information of such general interest that coincidence appears the most likely explanation (cf. Clark 1970: xxiv). The exception is, as with the interpolations (cf. section 2.7.2), Hugh Candidus’ Latin History, which “[i]n many places […] corresponds with E word for word” (Clark 1970: xxvii). As Hugh Candidus wrote his History in the second half of the twelfth century at Peterborough abbey, most probably during the abbacy of William de Waterville, 1155-1175 (cf. Clark 1970: xxvii; King 2004), it is likely that the E-Chronicle served as a source for Hugh’s History rather than vice versa (cf. Clark 1970: xxvii).

In terms of dating, the first continuation shows telltale signs of contemporary production. To begin with its contents, Clark (1970: xxv) notes that the text explicitly professes ignorance about events to come. Annal 1127 relates the accession of a new Peterborough abbot by name of Henry and gives an account of his rather reprehensible background, ending with a summarising statement which betrays no knowledge of the detrimental influence that man was going to have on the abbey, as the Chronicle relates in later annals: Þis was his ingang. of his utgang ne cunne we iett noht seggon.45 Besides

45 ‘This was his entry. Of his exit we cannot yet say naught.’ (my translation)
this explicit reference to the own ignorance about future events, contemporary production is obvious from characterisations which are hardly justified with the benefit of hindsight: annal 1123 introduces Henry of Angély, apparently the same who would obtain the abbacy in 1127, “as a defender of monastic interests, without a hint of what he was later to mean for Peterborough” (Clark 1970: xxv).

Turning to palaeographic evidence for contemporary production, the first continuation features several changes of ink as well as of the appearance of the writing, chiefly coinciding with the end of annals. These changes give rise to the first continuation having been entered in six blocks: 1122; 1123; 1125 to 1126, line 11; 1126, line 12 to 1127; and 1128 to 1131 (cf. e.g. Whitelock 1954: 14, Ker 1957: 425; Clark 1970: xvi, xxv and Irvine 2004: xix). Plummer (1899[1952]: xxxv) interprets these variations as changes of hands rather than variations within one hand, but he also deems the first continuation as contemporary (cf. Plummer 1899[1952]: xlvii). To assume just two scribes for all the E-text appears to be the scholarly consensus (cf. e.g. Bergs & Skaffari 2007: 7 or Home 2007: 20-22). In any case, whether the first continuation is ascribed to one or several scribes has no bearing on its contemporary character or its Peterborough provenance.

Hence, the first continuation finds entry into the sample of northern chronicle material as being from Peterborough and written in the 1120s and early 1130s.

2.7.4. The Second Continuation

While Scribe 1 at least tried to preserve to some extent the chronicle format of the text he copied and interpolated in the continuation he wrote, this changed suddenly and radically when Scribe 2 took over with annal 1132. The entire period covered by the second continuation, 1132-1154, contains only six “annals”: 1132, 1135, 1137, 1138, 1140, and 1154. The material conveyed is ordered by topic rather than chronology:

[Under 1137 the story reaches forward to 1144 (St. William of Norwich) and even to 1155 (the end of Martin’s abbacy); then it reverts to 1138; then under 1140 is unfolded without reference to date, and not always in true order, an epitome of the military and political history of nearly fifteen years. (Clark 1970: xxv)]

It appears that the second scribe subsumed matters of church and society under 1137 and those pertaining to military and politics under 1140 (cf. Clark 1970: xxv-xxvi). This state of affairs very strongly suggests an entry en bloc rather than piecemeal updating. For instance, the consecration of the new minster at Peterborough – the previous one was destroyed by a fire in 1116 – is reported under 1137, but nevertheless gives the year as ðæt was anno ab incarnatione Domini Mcxl. a combustione loci xxiii, i.e. 1140 CE
and 23 years after the place burned down. Moreover, again under 1137, the reign of
King Stephen, also known as the Anarchy (1135-1154), is twice reported to have lasted
19 winters. This correct assessment must come from the benefit of hindsight, unless we
want to attribute minute powers of clairvoyance to the scribe or his colleagues.
Furthermore, the text's appearance is uniform, displaying no variation of ink or writing
characteristic of the first continuation (cf. Clark 1970: xxv)

An entry en bloc after 1154 is thus well evidenced and generally accepted. The date
of production typically given is in or a few years later than 1155 (cf. e.g. Whitelock 1954:
31; Clark 1970: xii, x; and Irvine 2004: xix).

Having established the date of production as the late 1150s, we now turn to its place
of composition. Both continuations, the second even more than the first, are decidedly
and openly local in their outlook, allotting as much or even more space to report and
comment on local events of no superregional repercussions (e.g. Henry of Angély, cf.
Section 2.7.3 above) than to record matters of national importance (cf. Clark 1970:
xxxv). Also, these comments, rare or absent in other sections of the Anglo-Saxon
Chronicle manuscripts, openly display a Peterborough point of view, also visible for
instance in Peterborough being consistently referred to as pe burh, “the town”, while
other places are called by their names.

The language of both continuations is described as “distinctively East Midland in
dialect” (Irvine 2004: ciii) and deviating from the standard West Saxon of the copied
part (cf. Home 2007: 20). Knowles (1949: 424) reports abbeys to draft their monastic
personnel from the local populace in the thirteenth and late twelfth century, which lets
Clark (1970: xxxvii) see no reason why there should have been any other practice in the
1120s and 1150s.

As a final point, both continuations feature not only French loans as expected, but
also, and more interestingly, Scandinavian loan words, often as their first attestation (cf.
Clark 1970: lxii). The frequency of these is higher in the second than in the first
continuation, and notably, they are not restricted to technical terms (e.g. utlaga
“outlaw”), but also extend to higher-frequency items such as basic verbs (e.g. tacan
“take”, destined to replace the native niman) and even closed-class words such as
conjunctions and prepositions (e.g. oc “but”, fraward “(away) from”, poh “though” or til
“till”). Moreover, new verbal constructions involving postmodifying particles, very
reminiscent of Modern English’s abundant phrasal verbs, appear and may be borrowed
from ON language use, such as gyfen up “give up, surrender” or leten ut “let out” (cf. Clark
1970: lxix). Clark interprets this in a way that is highly pertinent to the connection of

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46 This point is echoed and expanded upon in e.g. Hiltunen (1983) and Kastovsky (1992). But see Thim
(2008, 2012) and Lutz (2012) for opinions to the contrary. Section 3.3.4 also contains a brief
discussion of this issue.
OE-ON language contact with the changes in the gender system in mediaeval English analysed in this study:

So, although few, the Norse loans here do show intimate penetration of English by Norse grammar, and in this they contrast with the Romance loans, which are limited [...] to words associated with government or with the ruling classes. (Clark 1970: lxix)

In sum, then, there is a fair amount of converging evidence to anchor the second continuation at Peterborough and in the late 1150s, while conflicting evidence appears to be absent. Inclusion of the final portion of the Peterborough Chronicle into the sample of northern Chronicle material is thus warranted.

2.7.5. Northern Material Obtained from E

The sections above identified a number of northern annals and passages which are summarised below. As the early northern material, given in Table B8 below, was copied at least once, this introduces an unavoidable moment of uncertainty regarding its dating, hence the wide range of possible time of production. Placement of this earlier material is also somewhat indirect. By including only those annals and passages which are absent from MSS ABC,47 and which in addition show a northern bias in contents and/or attitude, this moment of uncertainty can be reduced, but not entirely disposed of.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early northern material in E</th>
<th>Annals</th>
<th>Time of composition</th>
<th>Time of copying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>full annals shared by DE, absent from ABC</td>
<td>155 693, 697, 699 702, 727, 735, 741, 757, 765, 766, 768, 776, 778, 780, 782, 788, 789, 791, 793, 795, 798 806</td>
<td>900 - 1050</td>
<td>ca 1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parts of annals shared by DE, absent from ABC</td>
<td>709, 721, 733, 734, 737, 744, 752, 755, 759, 760, 761, 762, 774, 777, 779, 785, 790, 792, 794, 796, 797 800, 803</td>
<td>900 - 1050</td>
<td>ca 1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>full annals of northern material exclusive to E</td>
<td>617, 626, 634, 684</td>
<td>900 - 1100</td>
<td>ca 1120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partial annals of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47 Exempt from this are some Canterbury interpolations in the Parker MS. that were evidently taken from an ancestor of EF (cf. Sections 2.2 and 2.8).
Considering the material in Table B8, D is the better choice for a textual basis, because MS. E was demonstrably copied by the same person writing the First Continuation, in 1120-1135 CE, while MS. D features comparable material at least two generations earlier. Because the material from D is not abundant enough, we augment the sample for early northern Chronicle material with the four full annals of northern material exclusive to E: 617, 626, 634, and 684. Both excerpts underwent at least one copying process in the mid-eleventh, respectively early twelfth century, so that a modernising influence of the copyists cannot be excluded. Especially for this reason material from MS. E only features modestly in the sample. However, if departures from sWS gender fail to manifest in appreciable numbers, we can conclude the later copyists to have reproduced their originals very faithfully, so that we can interpret the language of these copy as representing a stage of the language up to 150 years earlier.

The late northern material, by contrast, is well dated and placed: its Peterborough origin and twelfth-century provenance is universally accepted. Table B9 below provides the annals identified as northern in the discussion above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Late northern material in E</th>
<th>Annals</th>
<th>Time of composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpolations</td>
<td>654, 656, 675, 686</td>
<td>1116 - 1122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>777</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>852a, 870</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>963</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1013, 1041, 1052, 1066, 1069, 1070, 1102, 1103, 1107, 1114, 1115, 1116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Continuation</td>
<td>1122, 1123, 1124, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128, 1129, 1130, 1131</td>
<td>contemporary, ca 1122 – 1135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Continuation</td>
<td>1132, 1135, 1137, 1138, 1140, 1154</td>
<td>shortly after 1155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B9: Late northern material obtained from MS. E

To reach about five thousand words per sample, it suffices to add annals 1125-1131 of the First Continuation to the Second Continuation to form the Late Northern Chronicle sample analysed in Section 6.5.
2.8. MS. F “The Bilingual Canterbury Epitome” (British Museum, Cotton MS. Domitian A viii.)

The last Chronicle manuscript to be discussed here is the so-called “Canterbury bilingual epitome”, commonly referred to as MS. F. We shall start by finding out whether this Chronicle’s by-name is apposite and captures its character and provenance accurately.

2.8.1. Provenance of F

There is widespread agreement, if not a total consensus about this manuscript originating from Canterbury, more precisely, Christ Church (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxvi; Whitelock et al. 1961: xii, xvii; Whitelock 1979: 110, 117; Dumville 1983: 45; Baker 2000: ix). Evidence for the Christ Church origin of the manuscript is diverse, but unequivocal, so that we can forgo a detailed revision and direct the interested reader to Baker (2000) for a review of the recent state of research.

Let it suffice to point to one somewhat special type of evidence, and that is the scribal relationship with the Parker Chronicle and its continuation as the Acta Lanfranci (cf. Section 2.2), but also with other documents: the principal scribe of MS. F – contributions from other scribes in the Anglo-Saxon part of the text are confined to marginal additions and one brief intermission of one sentence by a contemporary colleague (cf. Baker 2000: xxiii) – wrote in a hand characterised for instance as ‘untidy’, ‘irregular’ or, quite acerbically, ‘hasty, slipshod, careless and mean’ (cf. Baker 2000: xvii). As a consequence other documents bearing the same distinctive script can be linked to him, and hence dated and placed on this basis. This peculiar hand wrote 30 to 40 interventions, interpolations and other additions into the Parker manuscript (cf. Dumville 1983: 43; Bately 1986: xl-xlii), which is known to have been in Canterbury some time in the eleventh century. Also, his distinctive script survives in two other documents, a grant of land to Christ Church and a writ of Edward the Confessor, both of which are mediaeval forgeries (cf. Baker 2000: xxiii). Especially the first one establishes quite beyond doubt Christ Church as the F-scribe’s home, and hence also the home of MS. F. Moreover, our scribe was apparently more than a low-ranking monk working in the scriptorium day in, day out, but rather someone deemed discreet and loyal enough to be entrusted with the delicate task of forging documents.

There is a similarly general agreement with regard to its time of composition; the same scholars date the manuscript to about 1100, give or take one or two decades (cf. e.g. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxvi; Ker 1957: xviii; Whitelock et al. 1961: xii, xvii; Whitelock 1979: 110, 117; Dumville 1983: 44-45; Baker 2000: lxxvi). Some scholars attempt a more precise dating within this period, essentially arguing for either a late eleventh or early twelfth-century production. The most persuasive, best evidenced attempt at a
more precise dating is proffered by Baker (2000: lxxvi-lxxvii) who notes the scribe’s interest in the Investiture Controversy (cf. Section 2.2.3.2), which began in 1100 and was settled by compromise in 1107, which Baker (2000) takes as the most probable dating of the manuscript. Although settled by compromise, the matter continued to be an issue, with regard to which Baker (2000: lxxvi) concedes that a later date is possible. At any rate, all the surviving documents featuring this scribe’s writing must date to a period no longer than a lifetime, and in the light of what we know about the dating of MSS. A and F, it is justified to postulate that this scribe was active around 1100.

2.8.2. Character of F

Having established this Chronicle’s place and time of production as Christ Church around 1100, and thus motivated part of its cognomen, let us turn to the rest of this text’s by-name: ‘bilingual epitome’ started out as a description rather than a name for the text, and apparently goes back to Plummer (1899[1952]: xxxviii).

That this Chronicle version is bilingual is obvious, each English entry is followed by a Latin version of that entry, but Plummer’s assessment of F’s being an epitome might not be entirely accurate.

The relation of F to E is not difficult to determine [sic] In the main the relation is that of a bilingual epitome. The way in which the compiler of F deals with the entries contained in E varies in different cases. Sometimes he copies almost verbatim, sometimes he omits altogether. But as a rule he epitomises, preserving generally the wording of his original. [...] He was not, however, restricted to E. As the interpolator of Ā [i.e. A] he must have had access to that MS. also; and in several cases his entries show a greater affinity with Ā than with E; in a few they are conflated from Ā and E, while in others they are derived exclusively from Ā, the entries not appearing in E at all. (Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxviii)

Although Plummer seems to imply that F was conflated from MSS A and E, he later specifies the latter to have been an ancestor of E (cf. Plummer 1899[1952]: xxxviii).48 Baker (2000: xliv), referring to the numerous errors the F scribe committed and the hurried, absentminded copying indicated by the untidy script, deems it more likely that he did not in fact conflate A and an ancestor of E, but rather copied and possibly redacted one complex, i.e. heavily annotated exemplar. This exemplar then was a conflation of several sources, considerably more than the extant A and an ancestor of E and possibly D, as Plummer (1899[1952]: xxxviii-xl) thought.

48 The E-text in its surviving form was written at Peterborough, quite certainly not before 1120 (cf. Section 2.7.1).
The lion’s share of F’s contents is indeed witnessed by the extant E, i.e. most of F’s material is taken from the predecessor of the Laud manuscript. Where the proto-E’s coverage is scant, the F-scribe remedies this by inserting material from the Parker Manuscript (A), which he in turn altered and annotated extensively in the process (cf. Baker 2000: xxix-xxx). “In short, he was an enthusiastic reviser of manuscripts” (Baker 2000: xxx). He apparently also had access to a version of the Latin Annales Wintonienses, from which the Latin annals 934 in E and F stem. (cf. Baker 2000: xxxi). Moreover, Baker (2000: xlv-lvii) identifies material that ultimately originates from a Chronicle version related to the D-text, the Canterbury annals contained in London, BL, Cotton Caligula A. xv, a Latin Chronicle from Winchester, an early version of the Historia Regum, the Annals of Jumieges and the Annals of St Evroul, which appear to have been widely circulated in England, the Historia Brittonum, and Bede’s De Temporum Ratione. He returned again to Bede's Historia ecclesiastica for additional material and Latin ‘translations’.

In sum, this manuscript makes use of “more than twenty sources, including histories, chronicles, charters and saints’ lives” (Baker 2000: lxix) When conflating these sources, the scribe had a distinct focus on ecclesiastical affairs at the expense of matters of military and secular politics (cf. Baker 2000:xliii).

In being a conflation of multiple sources, the F-text is not unlike MS D (cf. section 2.6 above), and thus entails the same challenges and problems discussed there. With this in mind, Plummer’s term ‘epitome’ hence captures only part of this manuscript’s character. With regard to the multitude of sources and the clear indications of hurried writing, it remains somewhat questionable whether linguistic phenomena such as gender assignment, exponence and agreement reflect the language use of the F-scribe or rather his (undated and unlocalised) sources. On the other hand, these sources were in Latin, except for the three Chronicle manuscripts (i.e. MS. A, the predecessor of E, and a relative of D), which would invite us to surmise that the language of F is essentially that of its scribe.

However, we should be cautious not to jump to premature conclusions, for Baker (2000: lxvi- lxxiv) finds some evidence suggesting that our scribe worked with ‘pre-conflated’ and/or intermediary sources: for example the English and Latin entries in the annals up to 991 Baker judges to have been written consecutively, but from annal 992 onwards the scribe appears to have entered the English material first and supplied the Latin version somewhat later, hinting at a bilingual template extending up to 991, but no further. Also, in annal 1016, another scribe takes over for a few lines, an event Baker

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49 Baker (2000:xxxi) provides some evidence suggesting that the Latin annals in MS. E were entered into E’s predecessor while the F-scribe worked on his manuscript.

50 Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica is an important source for all surviving versions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, as many annals of the Common stock as well as the Northern Recension derive from it (cf. e.g. Baker 2000: lv).
(2000: lxxii) considers unlikely if this part of the manuscript was composed on the fly rather than copied. Neither the templates from which F may have been copied nor the putative intermediary sources survived, evidence for their existence is indirect at best, so that the language of the English entries may not entirely reflect then current language use. Additionally, a sizeable portion of the sources from which MS. F was collated were in Latin, so that putative Latin interference cannot entirely be ruled out.

2.8.3. Annals for Analysis from F

Baker (2000: lxxix) judges the principal scribe’s language as “idiomatic”, which stands in conspicuous contrast to the messy miscellany of archaic, obsolescent, current, dialectal, standard, and standardised forms that obtain from Cubbin’s (1996: lxxviii-ciii) meticulous analysis of MS. D (cf. Section 2.6.1. above). But as mentioned before, most of the material in F derives from proto-E, and the scribe did, as a rule, not modernise the language of the English entries he copied (cf. Baker 2000: lxxxi). On the other hand, not all entries derive from proto-E: some of F’s vernacular annals occur in no other manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and it is in these annals that non-West Saxon (i.e. late) forms cluster, which Baker (2000: lxxxi) understands as the scribe having composed or translated rather than copied these annals. Subscribing to this interpretation, we can take the relevant annals 694, 796, 870, and 995 as instances of apparently authentic early twelfth-century southern English and compare them to the near-contemporary Peterborough entries in the Laud manuscript.

These four annals from F are too not entirely free of the suspicion of putative interference; their source could theoretically have been in Latin. However, this theoretical possibility holds for practically any passage of text, especially for those dated to the times between Conquest and Chaucer (called the ‘Dark Age’ by some), since under William the Bastard and his Francophone successors, English as a language for administrative, ecclesiastical and scholarly purposes withered and eventually essentially died. The contention is hence not only entirely theoretical (positive evidence for Latin templates or sources is absent), but also of such universality (it is potentially valid for any OE text) that, to all intents and purposes, it is a moot point and as such has no real bearing on data selection in this particular case.

More importantly and pertinently, the contents of these annals reveals them to be eloquent, yet blatant attempts at rewriting history: we reported earlier that the F-scribe was very much interested in the Investiture Controversy (cf. Sections 2.2 and 2.8.1 above), and since he was a clergyman, we can safely assume that he must have taken a rather dim view on the nobility appointing church personnel while at the same time advocating the church's position in this matter. And indeed, the relevant annals purport to report, often verbatim in direct speech, decrees by then long-dead kings, declaring
that from then on and until the end of time, never ever again and under no
circumstances the nobility shall interfere with matters of the church in any way, but will
rather from now on rather strive to enrich and unconditionally support the church, and
also that the right to appoint clerics of any description is totally inalienable to the
church. This prominent aggregation of alleged edicts by kings, who thereby willingly and
voluntarily curtail their own power to the benefit of the church, is suspicious enough by
itself; the suspicion is fuelled further by these annals containing quite a sizeable portion
of direct speech, including first and second person singular pronouns, which is rather
untypical of the chronicle format, even in its evolved, late form as seen for instance in
the Peterborough Continuations.

What is more, the annals in question contrast starkly with the surrounding material
in that they are very much longer and display a fairly elaborate style, whereas the
surrounding annals are comparably short, though not reticent entries in plainer
language, as usual and expected. Finally, it is quite curious, if not downright dubious that
these purported promises of kings not to interfere with the church apart from
unconditionally supporting it come in almost perfect 100-year intervals.51

Thus, once again contents and context prove instrumental in dating a text passage
and ascertaining its putative idiomaticity by then-current standards: the material in
question is quite obviously original early 12th century propaganda, rather than ninth or
tenth century historiography contaminated by Latin sources and/or early 12th-century-
English redaction.52 In a nutshell, the four annals under consideration here are prime
examples of authentic early 12th-century Canterbury English with next to no risk of Latin
interference, because they are clearly not historiography, but contemporary propaganda.

51 Only the entry for 870 breaks this pattern. In view of this, we point to Alfred’s reign beginning in 871,
and posit that he was too well known and too much of a national hero already to be convincingly
exploited in this manner.

52 Even though half the annals refer to years earlier than that, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was not
commissioned before the reign of Alfred the Great (871-899, cf. Section 2.2), so that the entries 694
and 796 do not reflect language use older than late ninth century.